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SIGN OF THE VAN

BY

MICHAEL MONAHAN

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AT THE SIGN OF THE VAN

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BY MICHAEL MONAHAN

AT THE SIGN OF THE VAN
ADVENTURES IN LIFE AND LETTERS
HEINRICH HEINE
PALMS OF PAPYRUS
NOVA HIBERNIA

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AT THE SIGN OF THE VAN

BEING THE LOG OF THE PAPYRUS WITH OTHER ESCAPADES IN LIFE AND LETTERS

BY

MICHAEL MONAHAN

New York & London
MITCHELL KENNERLEY
1914

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TO JAMES BARNES

A faithful witness of these wanderings

OH, the skies are blue and a ribboned road
Shall the pilgrim's heart beguile;
Yet hurry not so fast with your load,
For there is many a mile.

And it's here a friend and there a friend
To bear your hand a while;
But none will go to the journey's end,
And few will stay the mile.

M. M.

New York, January, 1914.

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BOOK THE FIRST

(TO WILLIS GEORGE NASH)
AT THE SIGN OF THE VAN

THIS is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was as a vapor, and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.

Ruskin.

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AT THE SIGN OF THE VAN

I

A PARABLE

THERE was once a man who had a large number of valuable and interesting opinions which he wished to get before the public. The most convenient way that occurred to him,—having in view the intractability of editors,—was to start a magazine of his own. There were, of course, difficulties in the way, but these were finally overcome by the man burning to discharge his mind of the said valuable and interesting opinions. Accordingly, the man wrote out all his valuable and interesting opinions and published them in the first number of his magazine. There he stopped; perpetual writer's cramp and inspissation of ideas set in. While his friends were sending in their valuable and interesting criticisms, he wisely decided to get out of the publishing business. No

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second or further numbers of his magazine ever appeared; the first issue was the last. They say it is hard to get a copy.

I am not going to claim for this person that he was the wisest man of whom history preserves the record. I should perhaps think so were it not for his confession, privately made, that he stopped short because he had no more to say, having exhausted himself in the first great effort. When one is "all in," there is no particular credit in losing the fight.

It is added that the man lived happily ever afterward, but I do not envy his subsequent felicity—it seems to me he should have had more fun for his money. Having had some experience in kind and paid full price for it, I must feel a certain contempt for even so heroic a quitter. On the whole, although there is (God knows) too much publishing in the world, I should not hold up this man as an object of emulation. It is just that men should not be able to point even to a pelt of him on the barn door of achievement.

For it is nothing to publish your opinions once, or even twice—the test lies in maintaining them—in bleeding and suffering for them—in fighting for them against hope and staying in the fight at any cost and at any hazard. Do you know that, with all our talk of freedom of opinion, there is really nothing that is less free? It is perfectly wonderful

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how the world labors to take a man's opinions away from him; or, in other words, to convince him that he is wrong and to make him take its opinions instead. I sometimes fancy that the public which only writes letters for the editor's private eye has more zeal in its work than he. At any rate, herein are the difficulty, the danger and the delight of publishing. The man who has a bit of the fighter in him will surely not be satisfied with a single disclosure of his opinions—nor will the world, if there be any spark or challenge in the man. So you see the fitness of things coincided in the judgment of the person who published but once: it was enough.

Indeed it may be that the true criterion by which a writer should be measured is his power to provoke dissent. If he can make trouble there is probably something in him—the world is not moved without cause. I would not seem to blarney myself by the least suggestion here, or to work the soft pedal in my own behalf—the uncharitable will say that in any event; but I am sometimes rather astonished at the number of people who think it worth their while to disagree with this little magazine and to write me of the fact. Certainly I never proposed to myself to agree with everybody—I guess not!—and some candid friends say that my one constantly successful effort is to keep down my circulation. However, I am consoled in this, that my opinions grow the more precious to me as I realize more and more

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what it costs to maintain them—I suspect this would not be so, to such a degree, if people would only stop trying to take them away from me! It's curious, but my opinions are the only property of mine that anybody has ever sought to deprive me of—maybe because they are the only things by which I have ever set much value. And yet, when all is said, I am not sure that I have any opinions at all, but only sympathies, which, being drawn to various and contradictory objects, get me into no end of trouble. Thus, I have a degree of sympathy with every shade of religious belief, whatever sectarian name it may bear; and yet, if I have a passion at all, it is for that faith without dogma, that religion of humanity, perhaps the ultimate triumph of Christ, in which I believe all the creeds will one day blend and disappear, —oh, a far day, I grant you!

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II

SPRING SONG IN HARLEM

IT is the Spring in New York not less than in green country places of which the heart now begins to dream. A swarthy Calabrian grinds out a vernal chant under my window. High in the air, above the rataplan of the street, rise the staccato notes. The Calabrian's wife twirls and thumbs her tambourine, looking up expectantly. For a nickel one may purchase all the grace and gratitude of the South. I make the hazard and am correspondingly rewarded. The dark eyes smile their thanks and the Calabrian twitches off his cap. Nay, I am lagniapped with the "Toreador's Song," but, having heard it overmuch in winter concerts and cafés, I feel that it is not in accord with the Spring. This, too, is the Calabrian's afterthought, for, the piece ended, without soliciting another nickel he lifts his organ to his back and trudges off to the next block, his faithful sposa trailing behind.

More Calabrian organ-grinders with expectant wives and twirling tambourines—one feels that everything is overdone in New York (except the

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Spring!). Children pour with joyous tumult from the great, many-storied tenement houses into the streets. A shrill gamin chorus pierces everywhere. Beggars creep out from their winter hiding places and with their manifold deformities movingly accost the passer-by. A policeman suns himself at the corner, in easy independence, looking with professional tolerance on the varied din and disorder of an early Spring day in Harlem. Herein is now the very heart of the New Jerusalem and in this particular section few but Jewish faces are seen. Along Fifth Avenue, south of 125th Street, the daughters of Rebekah, tumid of bosom, voluptuous and overripe, promenade in all their garish finery—the Oriental in the Jewess persists after years of American acclimation. About her is an atmosphere of love that breathes of harmony with the Spring, the revival of all life and desire, and almost seems to chant *tempestiva viro* with the music of every bold curve, challenging bust and flowing line—a somewhat vulgar and disturbing but yet sufficiently native version of the "Song which is Solomon's." An endless procession of go-carts and baby-carriages, each holding a chubby dark-eyed miniature of the race, suggests the solid virtues of these daughters of Israel. Truly theirs is a goodly inheritance. No people get more sap and sweet out of life than the Jews—and it is Spring in New York!

Still, there might be less noise about it. New

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elements constantly make themselves felt in ear-deafening clamor—a conglomerate inferno that would drive Stentor to the sign language. Don't kick!—it is the jubilant Spring chorus to which the scissors-grinder, armed with a cornet, furnishes a chattering crescendo. Fakers and hawkers of every sort mingle their strident challenges with voice and horn, with hewgag and shofar. The facial traits of the Jew repeat themselves on every side with a persistent monotony. Men lean and dark; women brunette and overfleshed. Now and then a man rarely handsome or a girl of singular but perishable beauty; and, occasionally, a head that recalls the patriarchs. That feature which, according to Heine, has become curved and elongated by Jehovah pulling the Jew around during so many ages, is here seldom seen in caricature dimensions. Prosperity is beautifying, and, if you will permit the word, normalizing, the race. You will not have a better opportunity to observe this than on a fine early Spring day in Harlem.

With the first genial warmth of the Spring sun come into view all the poor devils, waifs and strays of humanity, who annually renew their uncertain tenure of a bench in the public parks and squares. Poor snakes they, whom the vernal warmth reinvests with a new skin and a timid show of life and speculation. All of them have hard-luck stories (which are often not without a charm of romance,

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kind reader), ending always with a request for "a little assistance"—so they will decently phrase it. Some of them are deserving, more not, in strict verity; yet, if you be both humane and philosophic, you will not consider the point too curiously nor seek to follow your alms beyond its proximate destination—the petitioner's pocket. You will not forget that this poor artist in sorrow, who for an obolus moves your secret admiration, is also of the Spring.

No doubt the most lamentable among all these heirs of misery are the poor fellows who have just gotten out of hospital and crawled to the park or square for a sunbath. There you may see them on any fine day, sunning themselves with anxious care, looking at the backs of their thin white hands with the insatiable interest of sick men in everything that denotes their state, or turning a resentful yellow eye upon you should you step into their sunshine. At a little distance roars and rattles the great Babel from which they have dragged themselves with weary effort. Not unlike mariners are they, escaped after long stress of storm and shipwreck, to die in the harbor that gives them refuge. For certain it is that many of them will never go back to the great Babel, to renew the hopeless struggle in which they were baffled and broken. Here they will sit during the warm Spring days, each jealously claiming his end of bench by right of preëmption and indulged by his fellows in that poor monopoly.

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Here shall you see them dozing and muttering to themselves in the manner of sick men, or giving themselves up to long fits of blank abstraction. Sometimes a feeble argument will break out amongst them and voices rise high and shrill in the futile fierceness of the sick. But this is rare; their concern is not to argue, nor even to think, but just to sit in the sun, the good Spring sun, who is pouring his heat down their backs instead of on their covered graves. Healthy though you be, with life and hope at the full, the sight of them makes you shiveringly glad of the sun and the Spring.

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III

FAREWELL TO NEW YORK

Hoc erat in votis.—HORACE.

FAREWELL, you City of fuss and fake,
Where men the dollar their idol make,
Fit spawn of you, an Arachne fell,
Weaving your web for the sons of Hell!
Here's one, by God! that is glad to go
And leave you here with your noisy show,
Your foolish wealth and your flaring vice,
Your honor that only bids for a price,
Your myriad-handed iron gin
That ever crushes the slaves of sin.

Farewell to your fruitless rush and roar,
Where a life is a breath and nothing more;
Where the swarming thousands of every race
Insanely fight for an inch's space;
Where the Devil has never a moment's ease,
Nor can tell the half of his votaries;
Where human pity dies in the heart,

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And men have forgot the better part;
Where the only lesson that all learn well,
Is the surest road from here to Hell!

Adieu to the monstrous sweat and stew,
Adieu (ah God!) to the paramount Jew;
Farewell to the Lesbians of the pave,
The lure and the prey and the wiser knave.
So-long to the dive and the gilded den,
The image of God defaced in men,
The Satyr's leer and the wordless shame
That makes of mercy an idle name,
And turns to a curse the thought of Him
Who died for these on the gallows limb.

Farewell to your thieves of high degree,
Fit nurselings they of your "liberty"!
With none so bold as to say them nay,
In the House of Fraud they plunder and prey,
Tearing each other with beak and claw,
And scorning aught save the harpies' law.
Oh, Freedom, blush that here at thy gate
Should rise a portent and shame so great;
Here, where thou kindlest thy holy flame
And callest the exiles to bless thy name!

Adieu to your blare and boast and blague,
To your scarlet crimes that never flag,
To your evil press that crowns the sum

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Of lawless deeds with a premium.
Farewell to your fake of a "better class,"
Where the proudest name decks the perfect ass,
And the end of all is to imitate
The fool and his folly degenerate;
Where virtue has sunk to a thing absurd,
And a woman's honor dies at a word.

The Devil's luck to you all!—I know
A place where the things of God yet grow;
Where children laugh in their innocence,
And a maiden's blush is her sole defence;
Where the buds are bursting and soon the green
Shall spread over all the gentle scene;
Where a man may live out his earthly lease,
The country preaching its text of peace;
And a faithful wife and a thriving brood
Shall people the pleasant solitude.

Pipe on to your dance of sin and death!
For me is the country's vital breath,
The nights of rest and the days of calm,
The heart's repose and the spirit's balm;
Yea, the genial task of a mind content,
Rising unforced to its native bent:—
But the hollow prize that you call success,
The idols you cherish and caress,
The life that you live, a sham and a lie,
My soul will no more of—good-bye, good-bye!

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IV

ONE SUMMER

SO this, then, was One Summer which he may well count as gain, since, though filled with effort and anxiety, the labor was what his hand sought to do voluntarily; the care was to insure a future that he might call his own. Thus he found the fleeting, golden days all too few for his Task—time and he, time and he against any other two!—but somehow time seemed to fail him. Recalling this One Summer, so swift, so memorable, now with the declining splendors of Autumn about him, he can but regret much that was done imperfectly; much that in the heat and haste of performance was left undone. . . .

The very beginning of it (if you will not scorn a simple story) was in the early Spring when the Family moved away from a Flat in the great City, and took possession of the Little House in the Country. Oh, how happy the Children all were, and how glad to escape from the tyranny of the stony-hearted Janitress! No more threats of punishment if they but laid a finger on the brasses, or

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tumbled the hall-mats, or played on the front stoop, or—horror of horrors!—pulled the janitor's bell. There were no brasses at the Little House—even if there had been, do you think the kind Mother would have cared? No jealous eye watched over the hall mats, and the front stoop, which was actually a Porch, became the scene of Revels. The Youngest Girl pondered over this undreamed-of liberty for several days, until at last, being unable to contain her innocent wonder, she came out with—"Pa, are *You* the Janitor?" . . .

What joy to explore the Little House (that was yet immensely large as compared to the City Flat); full of cunning alcoves it was, and out-of-the-way cubby-holes,—really, the Children were sure it was all meant as a playhouse for them. There was a lovely bedroom for each pair of them, and each room was papered "different," and, to the great joy of the Family, the Youngest Girl (who is of an adorable but somewhat touchy disposition) could now have a bed all to herself, where she might stretch her short legs with comfort. And then, the most ravishing discovery of all, there was the nicest —the Youngest said the "nicicest"—Attic you ever heard of, with three large rooms,—oh, ever so much larger than our make-believe bedrooms in the now despised Flat, which the Children soon began to speak of as belonging, with the Janitress, to a remote past,—though even that contemned residence

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had had its day of praise. Of course, the first thing they did was to divide up among themselves this glorious Attic, laying down metes and boundaries in the manner which first determined the Law of Property; nor was the Youngest Girl a whit behind the rest in staking out her Claim and shrilly asserting her Title. But I must confess that they all agreed with rare accord to give Papa the "lightiest" room to "do his writing in," on condition that he would not go up there on rainy days when they had no other place to play. This agreement was duly ratified, and, I am bound to say, was carried out in a spirit that did honor to the contracting parties.

The Children's play being thus provided for,—and, really, what concern is more important than that?—it was necessary to think about Papa's Work. For, absurd as it may seem, there was to be a Business started, actually a Magazine published, in the Little House! Well, you would say that the Good Fairies had planned for Papa's Office, as for the Children's Attic—there was a sewing room on the shady side of the house, with two windows looking out upon a tangle of greenery, that proved just the thing. Here, accordingly, the Office was installed, the walls decorated with some humble pieces of Art (not, however, without Quality) including a fine impressionistic study of the Editor by Samuel Warner, F. R. A. Then a typewriting machine was procured and set up on a strong oak table, made (in his own

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time) by Little James of East Aurora. A beautiful blooming Country Girl was next engaged to operate it—and the Business began.

Oh, it was very slow first along, and Uncle Sam and the printer got all the money—even now it's not so swift but that you can see the wheels move. Still, the wonderful fact was that it did actually begin, and continued, by fits and starts at first, then regularly, to grow. For if a man has something to say, sincerely and in his own voice, be sure he will get an audience, however small. So the Postman, from rare stops at the Little House,—announced by his whistle which raised at once hope and fear,—presently fell into the habit of leaving something with every mail—there were only two a day, and during the first blank period of waiting, it's lucky there were not more!

Then from all parts of the country letters began to come in a steady flow,—nay, there were some bearing foreign stamps and even a few from clear 'round t'other side of the world,—a fact which greatly exercised the imagination of the Youngest Girl. To be quite candid, not all of these letters brought money or words of cheer—if success were so easy, it would not be worth having! No, there were letters which predicted failure and defeat, these written by "friends" who loved the Editor too well to hide the "truth" from him; hostile, wounding letters from strange hands written with the sole

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purpose of inflicting pain, but which moved only his contempt; letters from the idly curious who had no hope or hand to give the struggler; well-meant letters, too, that yet breathed discouragement and were better not written or read, since they but confirmed the haunting fear of self. All kinds of letters, indeed, but enough of the right sort, thank God! to hearten one for the fight and point the way to victory. . . .

Yes, this was One Summer worth living for—One Summer in which something was done for Life, for Character, for Purpose. Nor does he regret its tale of labor, and stress, and anxiety, its hope too easily depressed, its joy too easily awakened, its unwise alternations of confidence and fear, since these were redeemed in some measure by loyalty to the Task.

* * * * *

HIS REASONS FOR PUBLISHING

[From the first number of *The Papyrus*, July, 1903]

Why do I publish this little magazine?

The public, I am told, will ask the question, and I should make a clean breast of it in the first number of *The Papyrus*.

But that were to tell the "story of my life," which

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is so marvellously interesting and important that it would fill many numbers of this magazine.

Perhaps the simplest and most candid answer I could make to the question is this:

I am putting forth this little magazine because all my life has led up to it and for years it has been the dearest wish of my heart.

The reason here given is doubtless unique among the explanations of publishers. But let it stand.

There is a proverb of indifferent wisdom that, if you only wish hard enough for a thing, you will be sure to get it.

God knows I have wished hard enough for many things which I did not get. Perhaps they were not good for me—would I might believe it!—and so the just fates forbade.

Alas! are we ever convinced that we should not have had what we wanted? I recall my own early and ungratified desires with increasing poignancy. As an old man I know I shall be lamenting the baubles of which my youth was cheated.

And this little magazine, the darling first-born of my hope, which I now expose with fear and trembling to the cold world's charity,—do not think it has come easily to me.

Nay, I have purchased it with tears and travail—the price which the good God ordained must ever be paid for the fruits of love.

Ah, kind reader, you who make so small account

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of these few pages, sure am I that your heart would be touched with a warmer sympathy could you know by what hard roads I have reached this goal of my desire.

And now that we are fairly met, shall we not go on together, taking the chance of the road and gaining courage and good cheer from our companionship?

Dear Friend, into your eyes I may never look, your bodily presence I may never feel, the sound of your voice I may never hear: yet I need you for the long way. And the day may come when some words of mine shall lighten the journey for you.

Our most precious obligations, are they not to those whom we have never seen? Our dearest intimacies, are they not of the mind? Our most loyal and helpful friends, are they not of the spirit?

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V

IN THE COUNTRY

WHEN you leave Mount Vernon's main street, following the trolley road toward the heights of Pelham and New Rochelle, you begin to see something of the rare beauty of old Westchester.

I am writing this in the first days of May, with a great thankfulness at my heart that I have at last escaped from the terrible Scylla that but a few miles to the south crushes the lives of men. Would she were farther away and that I might free myself from the fear that some night she will steal upon this paradise, blighting its innocence and beauty! Proudly I exclaim with an almost forgotten poet—

"God made the Country and man made the Town."

From the attic window at which I write (I am thus high for quiet as well as to avoid trespassing on the Good Woman's proper domain), I look out upon a fairy landscape, rich in trees and grass and all those unnoted gifts of outdoor nature which have so indescribable a charm to one long deprived of

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them. The voices of my children gathering early violets reach my ear like the broken strains of a melody. They come upstairs presently to offer me a bouquet—in the City I fear I would have been vexed at this interruption of my task.

But in the country, children—even other people's children—do not get on your nerves. That is a condition of the accursed flat life. Here they seem to belong, with all young and growing things.

Also I have found that the days here are long enough for both play and labor.

There is always plenty of time.

In the country one does not mix the night with the day.

Nature is the great worker and creator.

We can attain the fountains of power only by getting her to support the effort.

The nights for sleep and rest—the days for thought and toil and recreation.

Health is the first Muse. . . .

Mr. Bard, who has chosen for his hustling emblem the Bee (he is in the real estate line), strikes me as not the least interesting citizen of Mount Vernon. Whether his activities have any relation to the cosmic scheme I know not, but, unlike the pismire diligence of many persons commended by the undiscerning, they are pleasant to look upon.

Although Mr. Bard belongs to all the fraternal organizations hereabouts, he has never once asked

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me if I was a Brother. Which I take kindly of him, for I am a stranger to the whole realm of grips and passwords, never joined a secret society in my life, and never took a pledge. Every one to his taste, but the Brotherhood of Man is good enough for me.

Yes, I know it will shut me out of a lot of things in Mount Vernon, where every one you meet belongs to some society or other, and every other man you bump against is a Past or Present Grand. I can well understand, however, that life would be shorn of Romance in towns like this without the Pythians, the Templars, the Mystic Shriners, and the various other Sir Knights of the plume and helmet.

No doubt my bookish tastes have had much to do in forming what some people might call an unsocial habit. A good book has always seemed more attractive to me than an average piece of human punk in a tin mitre. And I never could understand how it added to your culture to swallow a Ritual or read the Psalm of Life in moving tones to some worthy aspirant who was presently to be pounded with an initiatory stuffed club.

But I have not been any the less interested in that larger fellowship, the Brotherhood of Man, and it seems that as I grow older tags and badges of every kind have less and less significance for me. No doubt you have to take on that habit early in

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life, like most others. And I cheerfully admit that it makes life the brighter and busier and happier for many here, as in Hoboken and Hackensack. Think how jejune and joyless it would be in these bully towns without the parades of the uniformed societies, the paladins of the silver plume, the thirty-second degree lockstep and a' that; or what a glory for plain Bill Smith to rise to a big feathered shako and other gorgeous trimmings, with the sounding title of Sir Knight Commander!

Also I am aware that the eternal lure of sex enters into all this splendiferous business—a motive never absent when man the peacock spreads his tail. And then, bless my soul, we have the Ladies' Auxiliaries!

But I am for the Brotherhood of Man, as I've told you, and, though we shall not live to see it, nothing is surer than the coming thereof. Oh, Diana of the Ephesians will tear her lovely hair and send her walking delegates after us with gnarled clubs, for the business of making tin swords and helmets and plumes and buttons and badges is a very profitable one. My, what a lot of money will be saved when all that flummery goes to the dump—money that the Brotherhood will know how to use in the true interest of humanity. No make-believe mediæval millinery or variegated small clothes—off, off, ye lendings! No grips or passwords either, and no flowery flubdub or tedious tommyrot behind

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closed doors. No more of those wordy rituals which I am told many simple fellows spend years in learning by heart, thus acquiring a cinch on the Supreme Grand and Exalted Ruler business.

No, all that verbose and highfalutin folderol will be cut down to the brief declaration made by a Latin poet more than two thousand years ago—

"I am a man and nothing that concerns humanity is indifferent to me."

All sessions will be open and public, even to the passing stranger, and the gimlet-eyed Inner Guard will be booted off his post forever. Furthermore, if any man is caught trying to get up a Ritual again, he will be disciplined by the Brotherhood.

Oh, yes, 'twill be a great change, and I shall not venture to fix the exact date thereof. But I guess we may look for it about the time men take their feet out of the trough and think more of their Cosmic destiny than of what goes to make up their compost on this lower plane.

* * * * *

These were in the main hopeful days, for I find this cheerful announcement in an early issue.

I hope, and shall surely try, to make this magazine better and better. But I don't mind confessing to the sympathetic reader that the job takes all my time. Yes, though I believe in the union labor principle, I am working such hours as would not be

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tolerated by any labor union in the land. For I am my own

Editor,
Business manager,
Cashier,
Advertising solicitor,
Bookkeeper,
Private secretary,
Correspondence clerk,
Proofreader,
Copyholder,
Factotum.

And I sweep out the office and polish up the door-knob with such joy in my work as I have not heretofore known.

Because, you see, I cut out this job for myself, and I like it, after giving the service of my brain for years to others—who paid as little for it as they might.

Therefore, I am working as hard as I can; and waiting; and hoping. And so there hasn't been a strike yet in *The Papyrus* outfit—excepting a mild protest from the Good Woman who runs the Domestic End and, in the way of good women, now and then gets a bit jealous of my Job.

* * * * *

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A NEW SUBSCRIBER

Here's a dollar from someone in Lockerbie Street,
With the name plain as print in a handwriting neat.
Yes, 'tis *his* sure enough, and a pulse of joy fleet
Says a "Howdy!" to Riley in Lockerbie Street.
Oh, bother the number—it's Five Twenty Eight—
The easiest rhyme you can think of for "great";
And a great man lives there, quite unspoiled too and sweet,
Whom they call Mr. Riley in Lockerbie Street.

Ah, 'tis years nearly twenty since last I saw him,
And wept when he faltered the story of "JIM,"
And followed admiring the lure of his art
That called up the tears and the smiles of the heart.

A little plain man speaking soft-like and low:
A vast sea of faces intent and aglow:
A spirit that held them, now clamant, now mute,
While the hearts of a thousand obeyed as a lute.

No more was the wonder: so much and no more,
But who shall the cause and the secret explore?
Half jester, half poet, whole wizard and wit.
Can he himself tell us the marvel of it?

Just a square bit of paper, but on it a name
That is mellow with genius and golden with fame;

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And memories rising with antiphon sweet,
Cry a hail to the Poet in Lockerbie Street.

Let me see that again—yes, 'tis his very fist
(Can you think for this moment what I would have
miss'd?)
'Tis the name that the hearts of our children repeat:
There's only one Riley, one Lockerbie Street!

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VI

PRO DOMO SUA

THERE is a little house (yet large enough) on the slope of a low hill.

A green tree stands like a sentinel before it.

It is a very young tree with fresh foliage and seems all a-tremble with the rapture of its glad green life.

If you were to watch closely you would see that now and then the tree bends lovingly toward the house as if to whisper some secret of the Night and the Silence. What companionship so sacred and beautiful as this of the house and the tree?

Other friends of that house may prove unfaithful and turn away, but the tree will never change in its fond allegiance.

For many a summer it will continue to spread its grateful shade before the door—for many a winter it will stand a shield and protection against the storm. Only death can puf an end to its loving loyalty and service. . . .

Soon a door at the side of the little house opens

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and a small boy with red hair (his mother says auburn) and the look of an Irish leprechaun peers cautiously about.

Around the corner of the house with a joyous romp comes a little girl still younger than the small boy and evidently a sister to him. These two fall to playing noisily enough, but with all the good humor in the world.

Presently they are joined by three older children, two girls and a boy, the latter a fine fellow of twelve years. Then all come to the front of the house and begin to play merrily some childish game under the guardian tree.

I think I have seen them before—oh, yes! and two besides these, the youngest of all, are missing—one a lovely boy whom this heart shall ever miss.

Now the door in the porch opens and, as the mother of the children comes forth with the morning light on her fair hair, I see that the tree bends quickly over the porch, seems to whisper something, and then straightens up again, with an air of indifference and a suspicious rustling of its leaves.

What did the tree say, oh my heart, what did the tree say? . . .

That in a few short months, ere its leaves shall tremble at the first warning breath of Autumn, there will be a new Life in the little house on the low hill.

Ah, this is not the brooding young mother's

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thought, while she looks with pensive gaze upon her children at play.

Not a new Life—no, not a new Life! for she believes (though she will not say it) that the kind God of mothers will in this way restore one of her lost babes.

Ah, but which shall it be, dear God, which shall it be!

* * * * *

HOUSEHOLD PSALM

Take up the Harp of Life now and sing a true song—

Of her whose fruitful love hath filled thy house with the joy and the laughter of children.

Who hath often gone down into the Shadow for thee, while thou hast hardly pained thy little finger for her sake.

Who sees her beautiful youth departing without regret, content to find it again in the daughters springing up at her side.

Whose only error hath ever been in loving thee too much.

Whose love, humble yet divine, teaches thee more than all the treasure of thy books and hath ever enriched thee beyond thy dreams.

Filling the house with its spirit of quiet sacrifice and shaming the self in those that look upon it.

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Knowing no fickleness or unrest—such as thy bosom often accuses thee of—nor ever harboring a thought of falsehood.

Giving to thee ever more than thy due, though thou askest so much,—nay, putting God Himself in her debt.

Walking in the better way by a sure instinct, yet going not so far ahead but that the radiance which lights her may still fall on those who stumble fearfully behind.

Striving to lead her little flock to Heaven, yet unwilling to leave one behind, though it be at the peril of her soul.

Praying silently against all things that vex her path; setting her pure and sinless hope against the worst that the world can do.

Believing in God, and still believing in God, and always believing in God, with a faith that gives to religion its best sanction.

Happy for thee if thou shalt be deemed worthy to clasp her hand at the Awakening—ah! well thou knowest thou art most unworthy. God knows it, too, but even He hath not power to make her happy without thee!

Think of this now and then during the days she may be yet left to thee.

* * * * *

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A Letter

LITTLE SWEETHEART,—

You are to be taken away from me and I am to see you only at wide intervals. I have loved you with a perfect love since God first sent you to me—the one unspoiled blessing of all the dreary years. You were the very spring of hope to me:—when they brought you, a sweet, rosy, laughing babe, into my sick room, I resolved to live for your sake. Shadow has never come between us, and now in your adorable seventh year I know that your baby heart is wholly mine. Oh, yes, I know that and you too know it, though why you could not tell, for in a sense our love has been a wonderful secret just betwixt us two, as the rarest love must always be. God grant that your loving heart may not bring you to suffer overmuch in the far-coming years!

Your brief life has been all joy to me—a something magical snatched from the beauty of each passing season. What happy romps we have had together! What delicious confidences, when you would slip into my bed of a morning and prattle your little tales into my ear! What merry meetings at the corner on summer evenings when, daisy-crowned or carrying a little nosegay, you would lie in wait for me! What good times when you would sit in your own place next me at dinner, or throned in your own special rocker, and chatter of the day's events in school! What pride to show me, one memorable day, your little name scrawled in your own first handwriting—ah, how I kissed it! What joy to burst upon me with the glorious news that you were at the head of your class!

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To see your childish beauty flourish daily like a flower, to mark the unfolding loveliness of your soul and heal my own spirit in the blessedness thereof, to watch the delightful play of your April humors, to note the development of your eager mind and its leap from surprise to surprise,—this, my darling, is the precious thing I am called upon to put by. . . .

I write you this farewell with your dear baby name rising ever to my lips and the thought of you an unuttered prayer in my heart. I write it at home while you are at school, unconscious of the separation so near; and I set it down here in the little book that your tiny hands were wont to help with on "mailing days,"—the little book that was born in the same blessed year as yourself.

You do not remember, but once, when you were only four years old, I was away from home two weeks or longer. On my return you climbed upon my knee and, looking through me with big reproachful eyes, said—*Oh, Papa!—I wanted you so!* . . . That was the sweetest confession ever made to me. That is the thought I shall always keep of you.

Farewell, dear innocent. In days to come, when perhaps I shall be no more, you will find this letter here. Then you will remember a little . . . and understand.

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VII

SAMPLES OF HIS PHILOSOPHY. SHEEP AND GOATS

I WONDER what the Lord will do about the bad people who are better than the good. I would not add to His embarrassments, but the theologians have left the matter unsettled, and somebody must attend to it. And really I don't see how the thing is to be arranged, according to the received ideas—at least I'm sure that only God can do it.

For myself, I have lived only one man's life, but it has been pretty well divided up in experience of the good and the bad, as these distinctions are commonly made. Some of the good have been good to me and more of the bad. Generally speaking, I could have done without the good—would have had to do without them, rather—but I could not have done without the bad.

They have succored me in need.

They have visited me in the prison-house of sickness.

They have cheered me in adversity and braced me up when I was falling down.

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They have given me love when I most wanted it and asked nothing in return.

I owe my best hopes and my life itself to men who never have sat on the benches of the righteous. If these men must be damned, I should prefer to be damned with them—but we have put away the hellish belief in damnation.

I have known common gamblers to keep their word better than men who wore the livery of religion.

I have known kindness and charity, daily exhibited, among bad people, which I have rarely seen among respectable, church-going persons.

I am not sure, but I suspect that a religion which makes us so comfortable about the world to come is not the best cure for selfishness in this.

The most smiling and conscienceless liars, the coldest hearts, the strictest lovers of self, I have met with, were men who played close to religion—oh, very close! I do not say that religion should bear the blame for men of this breed—I simply state my experience. It is only fair that I should also set down here that I have known a smaller number of men who were not alone sincerely religious, but good to the core.

Still, so far as the strictly human virtues are concerned,—generosity, charity, unselfishness, humanity,—I have seen far more of them among the bad than among the good people. I do not attempt to

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explain the contradiction—I merely state my personal experience.

And whisper!—I know there is much good, too, among those poor women whom society has marked with a red stigma and who bear the burden of the world's shame. Kindness, and womanly pity, and forgiveness of injuries—oh, such injuries, my brother!—and the sorrow of the lost and other sad sweet blossoms of pain that bloom like flowers amid the mire of their lives. But God will take note of these as of the finest wreaths in the Conservatory of Virtue. . . .

When I speak of the goodness which I have experienced at the hands of bad people I do not refer to criminals (though I have known much good also among this class)—I mean people on whom the strictly respectable, church-going community cast an eye askance. These people are somehow attainted and declassed by the fact of their separation from the orthodox community. Of course in our day such a distinction is not of much importance, except in the smaller towns and cities where the religious interests are strong enough to make themselves felt in a social way and where, I am told, even business is carried on with an eye to the Lord's profit. In the larger cities, however, the people whom I have described as bad people are permitted to live their lives as they please. There are very many of them in New York and they help to make that city the

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kindest and most charitable and the pleasantest to live in of all the great cities of the world. However, the fact remains that they do not come up to the ruling notions as to respectability, religious principles and what is called social standing. I dare not compare them with the "best people" of any community, because I have no personal knowledge as to what is covered by the phrase.

For myself, I should not care to live in a world of conventionally good people, with all the bad people excluded who have done so much for me. A minister's heaven is not my idea of Paradise, and Father Dominic's version suits me no better. I have a poor notion that the Cosmos is larger than either scheme. Then, too, I had rather burn than be bored eternally. Not that I bear the least ill-will toward religion—if we didn't want it badly we wouldn't have so much of it. But such a world as I have fancied, given up wholly to the orthodox people, would be duller and more unbearable than the present one, lacking the class which furnishes most of the entertainment. However, there is no need to borrow trouble on so large a scale, for the good Lord, who is Himself a lover of variety and who perhaps would not care to be bored by a universal church picnic, has provided against this by making the existing satisfactory distribution of good and bad people.

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Still, I wonder what He is going to do with the bad who are better than the good!

* * * * *

THE FIRST BORN

Primogeniture is one of the most venerable things in the world, and there is a sort of religious sanction about it. The English people esteem it as a pillar of their belauded social system, and to maintain it they put up with the law of entail and sundry other inconveniences.

All of which does not change the fact that first-born children are commonly mediocre or even defective in an undue ratio.

The empire on which the sun never sets owes a far heavier debt to younger sons than to first-born heirs; the latter misdirect at home as in the Boer War, while the former die splendidly on account of their blunders, abroad.

Primogeniture is, however, one of the most sacred institutions of England, and Kipling's flanneled oafs will uphold it with the last drop of their blood. Herein is a tough argument against early marriage, for it is nearly certain that the best children come late—the best in point of body and brain.

Other things being fairly equal, the man of forty will have a better and brighter child than the man of twenty-five. Those fifteen years of character

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building, of increased experience of life, of added poise and self-control, of evolution and advance generally, count for much.

You will find that very few great men were only sons, and yet fewer the first born. More likely are they to be in the same class with Franklin, who was one of the youngest of seventeen, and who tells us that he saw thirteen of his brothers and sisters at table.

In the lively process of scratching fodder for this hearty brood, old man Franklin doubtless picked up some valuable hints which he passed on to Benjamin, the history of whose elder brothers is a blank, my lord!

Ripeness tells: the green and salad days bring forth fruit after their kind.

I myself drew the unlucky number thirteen and family legend has it that my father did not act as though he had won the grand lottery. I reckon that I had more reasons to be glad of it than my parents. But the point is one which modesty forbids me to argue.

A clever woman tells me that there is no estimating the trouble caused by the first-born of early marriages. This, she says, is easily understood in the light of our present knowledge of prenatal influences. The first child is the moral and emotional scapegoat of early marriages. Upon him are visited the follies and weaknesses of his parents at a time

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when their characters are not really formed. The languors, the ardors, the fickleness and coquetry of courtship, the varying gusts and flaws of amorous passion, the whims and freaks and quarrels, the extravagance of possession, the unbridled desire of the honeymoon,—all these things are bound to mark the first child.

If Romeo and Juliet had had a son, he would have been the chief scandal or the village idiot of Verona.

Nothing comes out of the melting pot but what has been put into it. Self-indulgence, petulance, fickleness and instability are the natural product of the things above mentioned and they are the earmarks of many first-born children.

Philosophers are of the opinion that it is quite impracticable for a son to choose his own father, else I should advise any such to pick a sage but not unsound gentleman between forty and fifty.

His own youth will have less to answer for.

* * * * *

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

Is it true that men are "all in" at forty, their best powers exhausted, their initiative atrophied and their usefulness practically at an end? So says that melancholy Jaques who calls himself Dr. Osler. Let us see how this is.

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I am myself a little shy of the fatal term, and, if I propose myself as an example, it is only for the sake of arguing the point.

To begin with, I will confess that, having been somewhat of a spendthrift of energy in my youth,—having also done more than a fair share of hard work,—I am now inclined to measure my tasks and proportion my effort with a wiser care. I am not afraid of the task, I do not recoil from the effort: I simply feel that I have neither time nor energy to waste in those often fruitless attempts which filled up so much of my youth. This is merely to say that I think I have learned how to work. I do not now work so many hours as formerly, but there is no need, since I know better what I want to do and what I can do. In other words, I have learned to simplify and to concentrate.

Youth is discipline; maturity is performance. But I will not deny that there is about the eighth lustrum a certain abatement of that first fine enthusiasm which, added to genius, now and then works miracles in the world. And, could that enthusiasm be prolonged beyond the early thirties, it would at least sweeten the portion of labor. Nature for her own purpose dulls the edge of this eager appetite—perhaps she is unwilling that too much work should be done.

The instance of a Rafael, a Byron or a Shelley proves nothing, for these names belong to the exempt

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category of genius; and Dr. Osler has laid his hangman's hands upon all sorts and conditions of men. Besides, it is not to be overlooked that poetry is chiefly an affair of the passions, and no one will dispute Dr. Osler that more poems are written and children begotten (though not always acknowledged) between twenty-five and thirty-five than in later years. But the question is not one of poetry or poets, and, moreover, instances of a contrary kind may be cited. Rather extraordinary instances, too; as Dante, who was past forty when he did some of his best work on the Divine Comedy; Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci, whose genius lost nor heat nor power under the frost of years; Milton, past fifty when he gave Paradise Lost to the world; Voltaire, writing a tragedy at eighty-one and a hundred books between youth and old age; Goethe, producing the most splendid flower of his genius, the second Faust, when he was past the Psalmist's allotted tale.

In my humble judgment, an intellectual worker attains his best at forty (I have said that I am still a little shy), and not before that age. If there be any falling off in creative energy, the loss is more than balanced by surer self-knowledge, maturer judgment, firmer purpose, poise, singleness of aim, and that clearing of the inner vision which comes only with the years.

I do not believe that the best work or the most

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work is done by men under forty. It is not the best when the quality is closely considered; it is not the most when the worthless has been thrown away.

A man who wrote very excellent plays both before and after forty offers me an illustration.

Clown—What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?

Malvolio—That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

Clown—What thinkest thou of his opinion?

Malvolio—I think nobly of the soul and no way approve his opinion.

Taking a hint from Malvolio, I think nobly of the man of forty (and upward) and no way approve the opinion of this truculent Osler. He should be made to walk his own dead line.

* * * * *

THE LAST SUPERSTITION

"The law is an ass," said Mr. Pickwick on a celebrated occasion.

No better popular definition has ever been given, but it leaves some things to be said.

The mental processes of an ass are relatively simple, at least on the negative side: we know what he will not do. This cannot be said of the law—out of that confusion thrice confounded we never can guess what will issue.

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In every community a large and highly paid body of men are set apart to expound or administer the law. They draw their salaries, they pocket their fees, they take their retainers—the law remains unexpounded. As the priests of the ancient oracles kept their credit, whatever the answer of the god, so these legal Pythians do not suffer in purse or reputation as a result of their failures to interpret the law.

A lawyer of decent parts would have to lose a great many cases ere he would be hopelessly discredited in public opinion. The people are well taught how hard it is to get satisfactory results from the law.

Men still talk about the superstition of this or that religious belief—the greatest superstition in the world to-day, kneeling upon the chest of humanity, throttling the intelligence of the race, ever devising new fetters and only at the cost of infinite struggle dropping an old one,—is the Law!

In the name of the law every oppression has been upheld, every superstition guaranteed and defended, every injustice sanctioned, every tyranny maintained, and every advance of the race toward light and liberty banned and thwarted.

Men have from time to time risen against the law and wrested a measure of freedom for themselves, paying full price of their blood for the same. But, such is the force of old superstition, they dared not,

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on achieving their liberty, abolish the law under which they had been enslaved. They changed it a little, of course, drew a tooth here and cut off a claw there,—and then sat down to enjoy the liberty they had so dearly won. It never dawned upon them that they were leaving the seeds of a worse tyranny than they had destroyed—there in the law!

The law is a monstrous fœtus in the womb of civilization; the many are sick from it, but the health of the few depends on the sickness of the many—this has given the law a longer lease in the past than it will have in the future.

The oppression of religions is virtually ended, the tyranny of kings is falling before the might of the people, the pride of race and caste is brought low, but a greater and holier and more effectual conquest must be wrought ere we shall hold in security the first title of our liberties. I mean the conquest of that monstrous superstition men call THE LAW—the utter stamping out and pitiless dispersion of it, with all its ancient mummeries, its lying precedents, its decisions that never decide, its hopeless labyrinths and stern justice for the poor offender, its easy exits and mild punishment for the rich, its fetid and furtive casuistry, and all the rankness that has so long smelled to heaven. . . .

What shall we put in place of it? A suitable adaptation of the Sermon on the Mount, which, we

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need not forget, was given to the world by a Victim of the law of His time!

* * * * *

OUR SOLITARY ART

America invented the Advertising Man and he is said to have been a large factor in her material development: he is also a chief cause of the national vulgarity.

Advertising is the one art that we can honestly claim to have contributed to civilization. A simple definition of this art would be: The power of selling or exploiting that which is worthless and of passing off mediocrity as merit.

The application of the Art of Advertising has built up the newspapers and magazines of great circulation, vastly extended the patent medicine trade and all that peculiar industry which is known as "mail order business." This is the commercial phase: on the intellectual side it has imposed upon and kept more or less constantly before the public a set of mediocre persons supposed to represent the talent of the country along different lines.

This is the common abuse of Advertising: that the mediocre, the bad, even the rotten, is foisted on the people and the standards of public taste and knowledge are thereby confounded.

Advertising has made notoriety the capital prize

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of fame and success in this country; its heaviest rewards are for the cheek of marble and the brow of brass; it has turned the classic goddess Fortune into a vulgar prostitute whose favors are such as to be dreaded by the fastidious and the clean-minded.

It may also be the chief reason why foreign critics deny us the sense of real greatness or true distinction. For as a people we are spiritually and intellectually barren, in spite of magazines that circulate by the million and electric signs with letters sixty feet high. Numbers were never known to confer real greatness. The admission of the many to voice and rule constitutes the menace of democracy and excludes the hope of such distinction as may be expected from a spiritually elect minority. In Greece the Athenians forming an aristocratic republic became great and immortal, leaving to future ages an imperishable legacy of achievements in all the Arts of War and Peace. Who does not believe that an hour of Athens in the time of Pericles, with her unrivaled poets, orators, painters and sculptors, and a populace capable of critically appreciating these and their works,—who does not believe that an hour of the Olive-crowned City of Genius were worth at least a decade of New York? . . .

Fortunate Athens!—she never knew the Advertising Man, hence she escaped that vulgarity which chokes and kills off the fine fruits of the spirit. Athens, in a word, possessed the secret of great

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men—not the recipe for exploiting mediocrities upon which we pride ourselves in this country. This, which may be called the Art of Vulgarity, we have developed to a rare perfection and an incredible money-making capacity. By it we can sell anything, however worthless, and crown the narrow forehead with the laurel of greatness. It is the great leveler, the arch kill-merit, the weasel that sucks the eggs of genius, the secret foe of rare and precious excellence. We Americans have made of it a cult, and in return it has damned us to a hopeless mediocrity. Great is Advertising!

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VIII

RIFTS IN THE LUTE

OCCASIONALLY there was a rift in the lute incident to the business details of publication, as I find the Editor saying:

The Papyrus, in its wandering quest of the Elect, meets with nearly every fashion of man that God has made, and also with not a few in whose making I should like to believe that He had no hand. Many receive it with kindly welcome, bidding it God-speed and come again—these are the salt of the earth, the children of light, by and through whom the free spirit has its being. Others reject it with curses and contumely, writing long letters to the Editor, full of hissing spite, which they deem to be righteous anger; still others request him succinctly to go to hell! All is part of the game, my friends, and I have no complaint to make of these persons. If it gives peace to any man's troubled spirit to tell me to go to hell, why, I do not begrudge him that Balm of Gilead!—hell is the one supremely humorous idea that mankind has evolved. Besides, to

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send a poor, struggling publisher to hell is to make about the worst abuse of pleonasm—I think that's the figure of speech—of which the human mind is capable.

Great is Allah who has permitted such diversity among men and yet suffers the poor publisher to eat a crust in the hollow of His mighty hand!

The getting out of a "magazine of individuality" on a fixed date every month is not purely nor solely a matter of literary inspiration, as one may derive from the following bit of petulance:

A man wants to know why I do not bring out *The Papyrus* on time, "like the other magazines." Because, kind Sir, this is not an "other magazine," and it is not gotten out by machine methods for the benefit of the waste-paper industry. *The Papyrus* is published twelve times a year, as the law requires, and whether it be two or three weeks behind the date printed on the cover really makes no difference—so long as we put the right kind of soul stuff into it. I do not believe a man could pray well if he had only a few minutes to catch a train—you cannot hurry the soul—and in the bringing out of this little magazine we both labor and pray.

For to us the making and sending forth of each number of *The Papyrus* are events fraught with

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hope and joy, with fear and anxiety—as every true birth should be. Something of my life, I must believe, passes into each number, something of good and bad; and, when the little messenger goes forth at last, I would often wish to recall it and change many a printed word.

Often, too, I feel as if we were saying a last farewell to it—as if we should never send it forth again. But this fear, which haunts us about everything we greatly love, stays never long at a time—and soon we are at the old task, forgetting the last number and looking only to the next. And so we hope to go on and on until indeed there shall be no next, and *Finis* shall be written by another hand than mine.

The following also exhibits the sensitive editorial mind under censure:

A good fellow and an honest writes to call me down for some opinions of mine, lately expressed in this magazine, which did not please him. Oh, fiddle-de-dee! Let's mix it up, if we must, about something worth while. What's an opinion, anyway? Does my vexed friend really know? Do I know myself—oh, humility! I tell him now that when I am perfectly sane (which occurs only under certain conditions of wind and weather) I don't care a dam for my opinions and could not be driven to

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fight for them. It is only when I am mad and the wind nor'-nor'east that my opinions strike into me, as it were, and seem to me necessary to the happiness and enlightenment of the world.

While the fit lasts I take my opinions very seriously and labor hard to pass them on to others; not, if I know myself, as a matter of vanity, but simply that other persons may be benefited by partaking of the immense wisdom and knowledge which I do not care to monopolize. I am even eager to do battle for my opinions and make myself quite wretched should they fail of a candid hearing. And it is likely enough that in my fiery, foolish zeal I may unwittingly cause pain to some tender hearts—for which I now and at all times ask forgiveness. But presently the wind shifts 'round to another corner of the compass, and I am a sane, good-humored man again, laughing cheerfully at my own and others' opinions.

Let me tell my friend another thing. Most of us inherit our opinions. I inherited mine, and they were of the sort that are branded into the soul by old, unhappy, far-off memories of persecution endured for their sake; committed as a sacred heritage of race and blood; confirmed by voices that plead the more potently across the silence of death; and finally stamped by a course of training that picked them out in letters of fire.

Well, I carried these opinions for the better part

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of my life, the joyous and hopeful part, and then I threw them away—perhaps to my loss and sorrow, for in these matters my heart is often a rebel against my head.

But let that pass. This little confession proves at least that I know what it costs to keep—and lose —opinions, and I could be quite logically mad on the subject were the wind in the wrong direction. It happens, however, to be blowing just right for sanity, and so I tell my friend that he cannot have a row with me, no matter how he may count my buttons, or tread on the tail of my coat, or jeer at my unworthiness to spring from the fighting race. There is nothing to quarrel about, for I haven't an opinion in the world which I would defend against him or any other man—at this moment and in my present humor.

Except, perhaps, that I ought to be privileged to be mad when the wind is setting nor'-nor'east.

Dante tells of a special hell provided for those wretched souls who mourned and repined in the sunlight of this living world. The passage is one of the most memorable in the *Divine Comedy,* for the lesson it teaches is charged with a truth that smites all men.

Who of us has not mourned in the sun, conjuring from his darkened soul a cloud to veil that universal source of life and light? Unhappy the man

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who so curtails his brief span, for, looking back with wiser vision, he sees that such hours and days are to be substracted from the sum of life. Short as was his allotted time, he has by vain grieving made it less, and the precious days and hours so wasted are gone forever.

Poor fool, how has he cheated himself at the banquet, still deferring the moment when he should eat and enjoy! Now mayhap he is admonished that the end is not far, and he must depart as one who has failed of his inheritance—that portion of glad life which is the right of all men under the sun. . . .

For a week or more I had chewed the cud of bitterness, nor did I mark once if the blessed sun shone in the world outside my own gloomy soul. My peace was broken. The spirit that calls to joyous work lay as if dead and silent in my breast. About it twined and crawled the tiny serpents of envy, and mortification, and wounded pride, and that veiled hatred which gives itself another name. For I had foolishly opened my heart and certain ones had sent these to comfort me! Now the serpent brood, in full possession, stung and tortured me incessantly, biting their tails, hissing,—so that I feared other ears than mine would hear them,—and poisoning my sweet blood with their black venom.

Yes, this fearful possession lasted some days, dur-

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ing which I tasted every agony that Hell can inflict, —and then, and then, a beautiful morning came when I was suddenly freed from the curse—freed, as I now believe, forever! Worn out with long torture and suffering, I had got up early to see the sun rise. The sweet morning air whispered to me of healing. The serpents were strangely languid in my breast—did they know, did they know that their possession of me was about to end? I cannot say, but this I know that, climbing to the top of a green hill, I faced the orient sun and opened my heart to his powerful, searching beams. Oh, the blessedness of that moment when my breast was purged of the serpent brood! Oh, the joy of peace and self-content recovered! A minute's exposure to the sun had worked the miracle,—and now my blood was coursing joyously, my pulse bounding to the old tune of hope and action, the whole machine of me again in order. . . .

Take the sun-cure for your troubles!

Property! Money!—I am thirty-eight years old and I have but lately found time to worry about these things. Heretofore, I have deemed myself rich enough in a book, or in a companion to my liking, or in the hope (not yet fulfilled) that I would some day write a good poem, or in my heart of youth that beat responsive to the pulse of some heroic action in the world. Like Hamlet, I ate the

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air promise-crammed—it was enough to live, to live, to live! But now I am conscious of a stirring within me of that lower self to which mankind owes the institution of property. As I draw near the *octavum lustrum* of Horace, that fatal term which separates a man forever from the dreams of youth, I 'gin to feel that it would do me no harm to get hold of a little of the Stuff. Being a poet by intention, if not performance, I catch myself often wishing for a very modest version of the Sabine farm. Oh, I should be content with less than the *hoc erat in votis* of my darling poet. A little house,—and enough to eat, with something to wear, for the kiddies; and the feeling that I have a quiet corner for my book and my task, where no man can disturb me; and the assurance that when I say I own myself, I am not a liar in the secret court of conscience,—that is all. Yet modestly as I phrase my desire, I know, alas! that it is still the dream which vexes the hearts of all men—independence!

This was written ten years ago. I am older, sadder, wiser (perhaps), but no richer. Allah be praised!—I still have my dream.

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IX

A BLANK

IN the Winter of 1904 the Editor seems to have varied his exciting intellectual occupations by getting himself laid up in a hospital for some seven or eight weeks. Hence the following explanation:

The two back numbers of *The Papyrus* most anxiously and persistently sought by collectors are those of April and May (1904). The hunt never ceases, but rather seems to take on fresh zest as time goes by. Not a day passes but I get one or more requests for these numbers; some persons asking are polite, but others strain the amenities in their peremptory desire to be satisfied. To one and all, reader and collector, subscriber and casual inquirer, the polite and the peremptory, I have to make the same answer—these numbers are not to be had.

Naturally I feel the force of the compliment implied, for no reader knows as well as I how good these particular issues were—indeed I may say they were the only ones which have not disappointed me

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in one respect or another. Though you may not think it, I am a harsh critic of my own work and judge myself as severely as another—always, of course, with the saving clause insinuated by the diplomatic Ego.

But the numbers of *The Papyrus* for April and May (1904) were—I will maintain it against the world—absolutely without fault. I planned them out, through long wakeful nights, with the most scrupulous care. I wrote all the matter myself, both prose and poetry, and there can be no doubt as to its quality—it was far superior to anything I have ever read. Especially the poetry, which, being composed only in the hours after midnight, had an air of detachment, of isolation, of intensity, that fascinated even myself. I will admit it was not cheerful, but then, at the time I wrote or composed it, I was in no mood for a song and dance.

Another glorified circumstance about these two numbers was that, though the writing was so excellent, it really cost me very little trouble. True, I was much awake and the work was all done o' nights—white nights indeed they were—but I incline to the belief that I would not have slept greatly in any event. Remains the recollection of that extra-human facility of composition, that grandiose power of thought and concentration, to plague me since for many a dull and fruitless hour.

But I am to tell the whole truth, in deference to

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the anxious tribe of collectors and also the Librarian of Congress. These admirable numbers of *The Papyrus* for April and May (1904) were never published—do you hear?—never published! They are rare, oh very rare, for they never had an existence, save in the dreams of a sick man; no type or proof of them was ever set or read, save that which delirium fancied on the white wall of the hospital.

But I do not blame the collector (who will still pursue me even after this explanation), for at times I am not myself strictly decided and clear as to the fact. And then,—and then,—there stands always the assurance that I have never yet gotten out an issue of *The Papyrus* which could for a moment compare with the missing numbers for April and May (1904).

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X

HEGIRA

AT home, Somerville, New Jersey, September, nineteen hundred and four. By the grace of God and (also) forty-five hard Plunks paid to one William Gupps, honest expressman; besides divers other bills and charges which prove that the thing might be done for less money, if you had to do it oftener.

I have just counted the Coop and they are all here, safe and sound. By kind permission of Mr. Gupps—an obliging man, Gupps, though he sticks to his Price—the eldest boy rode all the way with the load, starting at the ghostly hour of two in the morning (oh, romance!) and arriving at five the next afternoon; while his junior, the Red, stayed behind to give us the benefit of his joyous activity—(we lost him once on the Elevated and again at the Jersey Ferry, his mother having a Panic each time, but he never ceased to wear his cap triumphantly on three hairs). On the whole, the family voted the moving a Success—the eldest girl called it a Glorious Adventure—and they would like to do it at

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least every other day. My own feelings of enjoyment were a shade more restrained: I should say about once every fifteen years.

As a matter of history, I may record that there were no Public Ceremonies either of condolence or rejoicing on our departure from Mount Vernon—there may have been a kind of voiceless grief or dumb sorrow, but it was very dumb.

Every great man has run away at least once in his lifetime and some have done the trick oftener. The world loves a man who runs away,—as a Strategic Move, mind you,—and makes as good apologies for him as did Falstaff. If Horace had not fled from Philippi, Mahomet from Mecca, Dante from Florence, Shakespeare from Stratford, I doubt that we should still be hearing so much about them. Each had good reasons for going, but was too wise to stop and explain why—let the gossips have their guess!

I hope I am too modest to offer myself as a Conspicuous Exception.

It is also worthy of note that Mahomet, Dante, Shakespeare and others of the truly great left some bandy-legged, red-haired men yelling Pointed Personal Questions behind them—which remain unanswered to this day. So did I, perhaps. No matter—let them be damned! The asking of such questions in the present is calumny—that is why the great men named did not stay to answer them. In

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the future, however, it is criticism or biography, and the race of bandy-legged, red-haired interrogationists is perpetuated in college chairs.

But, to keep to the personal instance, the fact is that in those towns suburban to New York the population is so very fleeting that nobody has time to keep tab on you. So, whether you move in broad day or in the dark of the moon, it really makes no difference—except, perhaps, to the Landlord.

I like Mount Vernon because *The Papyrus* was born there—and also our Youngest, dear me!—and I shall always keep a kind memory of it. But there and in other towns too near the Big City I found that I had committed the unpardonable sin; which is to have a Wife and Six! As I would not deny and could not easily hide the Handicap (which has a kind of tendency to Swarm), there was really nothing to do but move on. And yet nothing is harder in the long run, for it is quite extraordinary how a man's chattels dwindle under the careful handling of the Moving Man, so that, by a singular contradiction, the more children a man has, the less furniture—no doubt the Law of Compensation is at work here somewhere if I could make it out. Finally, when I had nailed the Moving Record (our trials had begun in New York City), a man from Jersey showed me a way and made me a partaker of a Revelation which had come to him in the Night—I had never gone far enough!

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Mount Vernon is a nice town and I left a few good friends there whose kind wishes follow me; but I have immortalized it as the birthplace of *The Papyrus,* and so we are quits. We should never have parted had it been twenty-five miles farther from the Great Babel. . . .

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XI

GOD'S ACRE

A SHORT mile from the home of *The Papyrus,* along the broad turnpike, lies a fine old cemetery, as sightly and beautiful as God's Acre should be. It is by religious denomination Catholic, and the silent dwellers therein are (or were) mostly Irish and German adherents of that venerable faith. There is enough greenery to make the place seem cool and inviting on the hottest day in Summer. It is well kept, as beseems the prosperous congregation that supports it, though it is by no means what you would call a showy cemetery. Rich and poor are mingled here in death as in life, especially in the older section; but a decent care is taken that they do not discountenance or jostle one another. I noticed that to this end, evidently, many of the finer plots and monuments are heavily railed in, and the fancy struck me that the ghost of a poor man would need much assurance to cross the enclosure.

I have always had a mild passion for graveyards, perhaps because I come of a race that has

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ever, through its religious faith, been more preoccupied with death than with life. The skepticism I have picked up on my way through life has but slightly affected my love for the quiet homes of the dead. Nay, I am not sure but that it has added a poignancy to my passion, from the mournful fact that I do not always share the fulness of that hope which is exultantly sculptured on every tombstone. Mind, I do not say that I reject that hope; only I would I were as sure of it as is the humblest tombstone in this old cemetery.

Who indeed will deny that the affirmation of all these silent fingers pointing up to Heaven, witnessing the assured hope of those who lie below, has a solemn effect even upon the skeptic mind, while it fills with a passionate conviction those already prone to believe? A grave and a cross—these are the naked essentials of the Christian hope: to me, in certain moods, they seem more eloquent than the richest monuments, and surely more convincing than all the theological promises in the world.

The older the cemetery the better I like it—a new-made grave, unless it be that of a child or young person, as a bride in her orange flowers, has for me no sentimental interest. Now this cemetery is not extremely old and there are few century plants among the tombstones. But fifty years is a decent age for a grave,—not really mellow, to be sure, yet I would not pass it with a careless eye.

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Seventy-five is, of course, still better, but a HUNDRED reaches out for me clutching hands of romance! There I pause and long chew the cud of sober meditation. . . .

I notice that, save in the case of some well-to-do person leaving a goodly monument to proclaim his virtues, about five or ten years marks the limit of active remembrance, so far as the condition of the grave may testify. Many graves are, of course, sooner forgotten and abandoned to the grass that hides, the rain that effaces. But, with few exceptions, human love and care and memory cease to show themselves by their familiar tokens after a decade of years. Nothing endures in this world; not even the grief of widows. And then it is to be said that ten years is a long time and may well, in the majority of cases, leave no surviving mourner to tend the grave.

There are exceptions, however. One that pleased me much was that of a man who died thirty years ago in his twenty-eighth year. His grave was covered with living, beautiful flowers, and everything about it attested the most anxious love, the most conscientious and delicate care. An inscription on the handsome tombstone modestly attributed all this to the widow. "She is old now," I thought, "and her love has never wavered from the husband of her youth lying there." I took off my

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hat and stood a moment by that grave. There are not, I think, very many like it in all the world. . . .

In the more ancient and poorer part of the cemetery there are, of course, fewer evidences of care and preservation; the tombstones are mostly discolored and illegible, leaning awry or quite fallen down; and many graves have little or nothing to identify them, the wooden crosses which originally served this purpose having long since crumbled away.

An atavistic feeling warned me of the deep pathos of this, for these were mostly the graves of "mine own people," dating back some seventy-five years. They were laid there in that confident hope of the Resurrection which so strongly marks the religious faith of the Irish. Their names were inscribed on the plain wooden crosses or simple tombstones, with the legend of their native parishes in Ireland, etc., a quaint yet pleasing care that one hated to see annulled by the lapse of time and neglect. Obviously, nothing was omitted that might insure their identification on the Last Day, and perhaps few of them expected to wait long for it. Yet here were names and all lost, and in no long time this part of the cemetery will be perforce abandoned and the bones of these faithful Irish left in common clay. Is not this a dereliction at which the heart sickens? . . .

Well, I who have loved to walk and muse in

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cemeteries would not of my good will lie in one, to meet perhaps the untoward fate of my poor countrymen told above. I have a horror of lying in the earth, of the slow processes of disintegration; and, being of a goodly substance, I fain would cheat the worm that profits so richly from his politic alliance with the church. In plainer terms, when I shall have no further use for my body I wish it to be given to the cleansing fire; and I charge any friend of mine whose eye may chance on this to make protest if any other disposition be attempted (dead men are often fooled!).

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XII

A RESURRECTION

IN August of last year the kind little tutelary gods which up to that time had watched over *The Papyrus,* went off duty or slept too long at their post, and I was forced to suspend.

I could not then console myself with any good hope that I should at some future day be in a position to retrieve the misfortune, and to this effect I notified my friends and subscribers. I am bound to say that their sympathy and encouragement, expressed in very many letters, did for a time make up to me the loss of my dear little companion—the dearer, perhaps, for the anxieties it had caused me. I was thus, in a way, privileged to enjoy the luxury of reading my own obituary—a luxury as rare as it is deeply savorous and sweet. I mingled my tears with the mourners, knowing even better than they the virtues of the dear deceased—had I not kept bed and board with him these forty year? I joined, too, in tender censure of his faults, but loved him the more for them. And I began to think there was nothing in the world so entirely joyous or of

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such a marrowy satisfaction as the premature literary funeral of oneself.

In these circumstances (many will ask) was it not better to have remained dead? And is it not a shame and a scandal to put the mourners out of countenance and to spoil the memory of as pretty a wake as ever was seen?

I feel the force of these objections and I am in truth poignantly ashamed of myself—but it is so hard to stay dead!

And then, to give other reasons, I do so want to have my little say, and here is the only place wherein I can say it. Being a true literary man, with the artistic conscience and a real sense of style —pardon me, I am only quoting the mourners!— the so-called standard magazines are not for me. As a worker in the finer veins of literature, my name, though as old as my race, is not attractive to the snobbery of the period, faithfully reflected in our periodical press; yet it would serve me well enough were I a writer of the vaudevillian or roustabout class. Unfortunately I am in literary matters of an aristocratic taste and temper (the mourners again!), while my name carries perhaps a different significance to the snob and the fool. I had rather not bear the risks and pains of publication, which are a quite unnecessary handicap to the writing game, but if I do not I shall be condemned to silence and die as to my vocation unfulfilled, since

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I cannot bring myself to compete with the present-day horde of literary mechanics on terms acceptable to the "standard" magazines. Their gods are not my gods, their ideals not my ideals. Mine are the elect and venerated names of true literature; the stars that shine in the quiet heaven of immortality, sending down to us beams of comfort and inspiration, teaching us so much of the secret of their high fellowship as we are worthy to learn, bidding us hold off from the sordid struggle in which the precious things of the soul are debased or lost. Theirs is the contemporary Comus rout of ink-and-dollar made celebrities, many-horned beasts that have trampled and fouled the literary pastures.

A great Frenchman says that one writes at one's best only for a few people, the elect of mind and heart—well, you know what the mourners said! So we'll just be nice and cozy and select, but inclusive, not exclusive or snobbish; and from time to time we'll talk to one another, with the frankness of men and women who understand, of things *real* men and women are *really* interested in; fearing to discuss nought that lies between life and death.

With these few indifferently pointed remarks, I come down from the hearse, smiling, and take my place among the joyous mourners.

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XIII

A CHILD IS BORN

THERE is a satisfaction in publishing your own book: in certain ways it seems a thing that nobody else can do for you so well. But Allah has in His wisdom decreed that neither the sweet nor the bitter shall be unqualified in this world.

Our new book * was delivered to us by the binder about November 10th, and nearly the whole edition had gone off well before Christmas. This was a success beyond my wildest hopes, seeing that I am not a publisher in the regular sense, have no access to The Trade, and no money to spend for advertising; being, in truth, only a tiny privateer tacking perilously along in the wake of the big craft.

Allah has made great and small, however, and He takes care of both, when they are not too unmindful of themselves.

The result comes very far from landing me with the Six Best Sellers, and The Trade will sneer at it; but all the same I feel pretty good and don't care

*Palms of Papyrus.

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if I show it. Maybe there were not so many, but when I saw all those blessed books stacked up against three walls of the attic, barely leaving room to swing a cat in, I got a firm and logical grasp of the impossibility of ever getting rid of them. They went, as I have said, quite marvelously, and now I wish we had another edition to go through the year with. But wishing and having, in the wise dispensation of Allah, are two very different things—the holders of the first edition need not fear that their copies will be depreciated. . . .

If I were not publishing *The Papyrus,* I should have sought, and perhaps not found, a regular publisher for the book; but it is rather more likely that, without *The Papyrus,* the book would never have been written. The fact is not greatly important, but it may as well be stated.

For literature *per se* the typical American publisher has not even a rudimentary instinct and does not give a tinker's expletive. What he wants is something that promises a big success, for reasons that commonly have little or no relation to literature. In fact, the book publisher in this country is only a variant of the journalist; their methods and morals are hardly to be distinguished; neither will waste a fraction of a second on anything that does not promise a money success. Notoriety is recognized and demanded as the first essential in an author, and by the measure of his notoriety he is

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paid rather than by any literary expectation derivable from his work. So a great part of our so-called literature is conditioned by a kind of journalism that is chiefly murder and scream, bears the same marks of exaggeration, impudence, incompetence and haste—and dies as soon.

On the other hand we have a small, select and rich coterie of publishers, who maintain what they are pleased to call the conservative traditions of the trade. These bookmen, enriched by profitable, long-standing copyrights, and by the patronage of the incurious, the mediocre and the respectable, distrust anything that is not dull, shudder at sight or sound of a new name, and, so far as they may, go on producing feeble copies of the sort of literature with which their houses have always been identified. True literature—the rare and beautiful and vital reality—has as little to hope from these gentry, exuding smugness and self-satisfaction at every pore, as from the tomtom beaters and sensation mongers already described. "A plague o' both your houses!" . . .

Pardon the digression. There is pain as well as pleasure and loss as well as profit in being your own publisher, but now that the books are mostly gone, I can only dwell on the credit side of the account. A book—a real book—is the child of your soul; you hate to intrust it to other and less careful hands; to take Barabbas's ten per cent. while he does with

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your darling according to his own sweet will; not to be a witness of or a sharer in the interesting transaction by which each copy of your heart's fulfilment passes out into the world. Oh, you would prefer not to bother with the business end, but as things are, it's really no hardship to take the money. An alien publisher knows nothing of that exquisite emotion induced by opening a *letter with a cheque in it*—or, at least, knows only the coarser, commercial phase of it; I'm not sure that mere authorship offers a delight to match this. To commit so rare a pleasure, such a labor of love, to a foreign hand is like trusting one's "proofs" to somebody who cannot spell. Or like yielding up something akin to that privilege which mediæval lords enjoyed, of handselling the brides of their vassals. *Retro,* Barabbas!—thou shalt preëmpt no joy of mine; it likes me well to do my own handselling.

Another point. In your dual character of author-publisher you naturally receive letters that would not fall to you as publisher or author singly. Most of them are agreeable, many of them quite above your deserts (as you confess to yourself in pleased humility of spirit), but there are enough of the *other* kind to save you from falling into inordinate conceit. Oh, quite enough! Allah has shrewdly provided for that—and you give thanks that people are of such various minds, for in this is the poor author's salvation. In truth his lot is not unlike that of a

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wounded gladiator whom the cruel "thumbs down" of the galleries sentenced to death or the contrary sign respited to life. Not a few kindly persons take pains to show you how *they* are holding their *pollices*. Stern Romans they! . . .

However, we have to take our portion without flinching. There are some people, we confess with a wince, by whose leave we should not have bite or sup in this hard world; yet even they serve us after a fashion. For these bitter experiences put knowledge of human nature into our heads, if not money in our purse. What you have chiefly to be grateful for is the wholesome discovery that there is vastly more kindness in the world—even the little world that is open to you—than you had been wont to believe; and perhaps you will admit (unless you be an ass) that such kindness is the more wonderful since *you* are the object of it.

This experience alone would justify the cost and trouble and anxiety of publishing your own book, for has it not enabled you to read a little in the great Book of the Heart? . . .

Dear friends,—best friends of all, whom I shall never see,—I wanted to write my thanks to each and every one of you, but other tasks interfered and time failed me. Be sure I read your letters,—aye, every word of them—letters from brave and kindly men, from sweet-hearted women, from white-souled

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girls, from the sacred Theban band of youth. Yes, I read them all, and sometimes my tears fell in the reading . . . happy tears over the love and sympathy that have so wonderfully sprung up between us. Am I wrong to confess so much? O dear friends, whom I shall never see, it is you alone whom I do see when a little vision is granted unto me . . . it is you alone by whose grace I am enabled at intervals too long to rise unto the higher thought . . . it is you alone whose praise I crave, whose blame I fear, and for whom I would say my word.

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XIV

THE RETURN

MANY are the idiosyncrasies of writing folk. Balzac could write only at night and in a monk's dress. Tom Moore penned his Melodies in kid gloves. Sheridan wrote in a room brilliantly lighted with candles and rewarded every happy thought with a glass of wine. There are fastidious authors to whom the scent of flowers is necessary. A famous French woman of the eighteenth century preferred as a literary excitant the pungent odor of the stable. Mr. Richard Harding Davis honors himself and his inspiration by writing in full evening dress. Colonel Roosevelt, needless to say, composes in khaki and a pith helmet. For myself, I can't break with the habit of years, not to speak of the Literary Tradition; and so I go on writing the Good Stuff in an Attic—I doubt if it would come for me elsewhere. Environment gets to be fixed and necessary, like the walls of a man's brain.

The Attic of our new home in Mount Vernon being, like Gaul, divided into three parts, gives the Red

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(aged fifteen) a fine bedroom (liberally adorned with portraits of heroes in Fistiana), and me a comfortable study, with perhaps the smallest storeroom in the world remaining for good measure. Not any great amount of space, to be sure, but I have in my end three bookcases, a desk, a table and two chairs —and enough room left to put on my hat, if not to hang the proverbial kitten.

I am here high enough from the street to gain a reasonable degree of quiet and isolation—not absolute, however, for the Two Youngest occasionally "start something" and I may be called down any moment to loosen a strangle-hold. But, take it for all in all, I like it—and I don't know that a man can ask for anything better in this world than a quiet corner for his Book and his Task and his Dream.

No pictures here to speak of, because you see the roof is gabled and the bookshelves take the straight walls. A likeness maybe of some dear friend who believes in you far more than you do yourself—what man is unblessed with such, or can work without the silent inspiration of a face beloved?

Oh, and the tiny Buddhist monk on my desk, which you could hide in your palm. I knew you would ask about that *magot,* for of course you noticed the odor of the little incense pastilles we burn for him each day. He has a history, that *petit bonhomme,* who looks as if he were sorely vexed

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with the folly of mankind. So he well may be, for he has been four times around the world and never bores us about it. A lady whose thoughts are all kindness sent him to me as a mascot, from her far-off home in California. He arrived just at a time when there was really nothing for him to do—I had been obliged to suspend *Papyrus!* Then I was for sending him back, but the lady said, "No, if you wish to revive *Papyrus,* keep him. You will see."

I did keep him, and—well, I'm not superstitious, but here we are in the Attic together, he wearing a slightly patronizing, though always vexed, expression, as who should say: "Yes, you're at it again and I've helped you—but, between us two now—honest!—is it really worth while? . . .

I am living in Mount Vernon again after an absence of over seven years and a somewhat thorough trial of New Jersey. This is perhaps the most notable compliment ever paid the town, but nobody seems to be making a fuss about it!

Man that is born of woman is of few days anywhere, the Good Book tells us. And mighty fleeting are his generations in the towns suburban to New York.

Papyrus was born here in July, 1903—a fact that Mount Vernon will be prouder of in the future than it is now (why shouldn't I be candid about it?). I was fairly well acquainted before I left—without

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undue haste or idle ceremony—a year or so later. But would you believe it?—on my return I found hardly a soul that knew and few that remembered me.

The feeling of artistic nervousness or stage fright that I got up for my first walk down the little main street, expecting every moment to be slapped on the back by old acquaintances and to have the glad hand thrust on me right and left, was quite thrown away. Nobody took any liberties. I was pained and yet relieved somehow.

I strolled over to the Post Office, across the railroad tracks, where *Papyrus* had been mailed to a large and expectant world during more than a year. "Bob" Mason, the perpetual deputy postmaster, offered me the first crumb of comfort. "Why, yes," he said, screwing up one eye in Hawkshaw fashion, "I remember that little dinky paper because they had a hell of a time getting the Second Class. Heard it fell down afterward in Jersey. Say, if you can't make a thing go in little old New York State ——!"

I turned away without betraying myself. On the corner I ran into Judge Gay, one of our earliest and kindest friends. He shook both my hands with such uncommon heartiness that I suppose I looked my surprise. He noticed it and said, "I really can't help it, dear old boy, it is SUCH a joy to see you after—

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why, hang it, you know the Fra or somebody said that you were drowned in the Irish Sea!" . . .

The Mayor's office is one of the few spots in Mount Vernon that don't seem to change, worth speaking of. When I first came here, Ed. Fisk was Mayor, and when I left Ed. Brush was holding down the honor. Now it's Fisk again, rotation like. Well, they're both good friends of mine and faithful Papyrites. I hope they'll keep on passing the ball to each other. I have no third choice.

Dan Lewis, the printer, was another man I called on, having known him pretty well in the old days. Dan was a little slow at first—I suspect, however, that he was only waiting for me to give him a lead. I did. Then he broke out: "So you've come back to Mount Vernon? Well, here's a wonder. I'd have called you quicker, but you used to wear your hair longer, eh? Cosmic fleece you used to call it—say, you did have some queer dope all right. And you've dropped the what-ye-call-it? Always knew you would when you got sense and cashed in your experience. Nothing to it, my boy, unless you've got a Female Baseball Team or a Leather Check community or something like that for a sideline, same as the fellow who carried the something to Gomez."

And the good old man rattled on. I parted with Mr. Lewis more in sorrow than in anger—how foolish it is to expect everyone to understand us! . . .

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Walking then toward my new home, strong and happy and purposeful, in the bright sunshine, I suddenly caught sight of a building I knew but too well, and stopped short to put back a crowd of painful memories. It was the hospital where I had passed nine weeks in the Spring of 1904 and where the worries of publication, with all other cares and troubles, were very nearly lifted from me forever. I tried to pick out the window of my little room where I had often watched for daylight; where in my sick dreams I composed and edited, aye and published, the two MOST extraordinary numbers of this magazine (I wish people would stop asking for them). I saw the small grassy square with the soldiers' monument therein where a thin and broken image of me used to walk in the days of convalescence. I recalled my terrible eagerness to be taken away from that place, and to get well—to get well!

And it seemed worth while to have come back to Mount Vernon, just to look at that place where I so nearly lost the battle. Not to speak of our present cheerful purpose to take a fresh hold here, where we started *Papyrus* over seven years ago,—and put up the best fight of all!

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XV

HIS WANDERINGS OVER

AS the Gentle Reader may have lost his bearings or perhaps fallen off the Van by this time, I beg to recapitulate. *The Papyrus,* then, was duly born at Mount Vernon, N. Y., where it bravely weathered the first perils of infancy, and where I did my share of walking the floor o' nights with it. It got its first tooth at Somerville, N. J., and there it really began to sit up and take notice. Unluckily, it soon fell into financial measles, and was almost finished off by printer's croup! For a change of air, we took it to Cranford, N. J.,—only a matter of eighteen miles—the same as from Wimbledon to Wombledon. There it did perk up surprising, and by this time I was so firmly persuaded of the varied advantages of an active life that nothing seemed easier than to make one or two more towns before linking back to New York and completing the circuit.

I am aware that these migrations of *The Papyrus* have subjected us to much wounding criticism at the hands of certain persons the color of whose money

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we never got any fair reason to suspect. In spite of the personal implication, I have heretofore ventured to point out that every great man has run away at least once in his lifetime, as a piece of strategy, and that the world has loved him the more for it. 'Twere easy, had I the space at disposal, to show the importance of the Hegira or Getaway in universal and particular history. And I might add copiously to the list of immortal runagates already cited. But the hints given above must suffice.

Has not the Tentmaker warned us that "the Moving Finger writes"? I agree with the Man of Naishapur, for had I not moved often, and quickly, too!—you would not be reading this o'er-true tale.

Ben Franklin (who moved around quite some himself) used to say that two movings were worse than a fire. I don't know, for sure, as we've never had a fire, thank goodness; but, speaking as a mere amateur, I should guess that if you don't expect to get rich beyond the dreams of avarice by moving, you will not be sorely disappointed. We have never gone into it with a mercenary motive and so we have had that reward which pure disinterestedness always brings. So, I say, a little after that famous traveler, Sancho Panza, Blessed be the man that invented—Moving!

To the patient reader I will now confess that my wanderlust is pretty well appeased. I feel that I have seen enough of the faces of men and cities;

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like Ulysses, I grow a bit weary of the Sign of the Van, and begin to pine for an abiding habitation. Then, too, the sun is not so high as once it was. It seems time to have done with the Tent and the Open and to take root and Refuge somewhere. Alas, my friends, every *homo migrans* is a *stans homo* at the last!

Oh, it's not so long since some of the things which I have recalled, but a good while ago I stopped keeping count of the poor devils who started even with us, or before us, and left their bones in Dead Man's Valley. Once, or maybe twice, I was of a mind to set down my load and rest there a little, —the place looked so cool and inviting and nobody in a hurry to get away! But something warned me to push on—push on, and now I'm mighty glad that I did; so here again the migratory instinct saved us.

In the beginning I scarcely dared hope *The Papyrus* would go so far—the Money Problem stood dead ahead, a wall forty feet high, and no way to get around it. My friends were a unit in predicting for us a merry shortness of days. Needless to say, my few enemies were enthusiastically of the same opinion. Allah has a way of confounding the wise!

The Papyrus has lived unto this day, at any rate, and that is food enough for joy. True, there have been two or three unequal periods of suspended animation, when our friends gave us up for lost, and decently performed in our favor the usual mortuary

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rites. But in each instance, happily, the reports of our decease, as in the case of a famous humorist, turned out to be greatly exaggerated. For a time we ourselves thought that we were really and truly dead, but the cheerful preparations for the funeral, and especially the flattering remarks of the mourners, induced us to renew the struggle. It's a bore to be dead, anyway, and the worst thing about it is that one hasn't the privilege of talking back. So thoroughly satisfied are we with our brief experience that I hereby solemnly promise our friends that the thing shall not happen again.

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XVI

THE LITERARY MOTIVE

HAVING now told how the crime was originally committed and to some degree perpetuated, perhaps you will expect me to say a word, in self-justification, as to the impelling motive. This would take me much farther back than the starting date of *Papyrus*,—indeed, to that immortal consulship of Plancus whereunder hot and chafing youth first begins to take account of its dreams and ambitions.

At that time I was one of a small group of young men affected with literary hives (dubbed by the learned *cacoethes scribendi*), who were proud to call themselves the School of Revolt. In point of fact, though we revolted very much, we wrote very little and, for reasons obvious, published even less. All the same, we wore the red waistcoat, would have shed our blood for Hernani, and did our humble best to scandalize the bourgeoisie.

In those young and fiery days there was nothing we hated so much as what the world called success—the prize, we deemed it, of mediocre talents, the bait

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of the commonplace, the lure of the conventional. We would have none of this kind of success—away with it!—and, to be strictly candid, it would have none of us! We detested it utterly and were banded against it, both for ourselves and others.

I need hardly explain that the success we hated was the triumph of a sort of talent without true genius or ideality—the reward which convention bestows on mediocrity—the mess of pottage which the world gives to those who forfeit their freedom of utterance—in a word, the surrender of the highest liberty of thought at the bidding of a vulgar and commercialized society represented by the Publishing Trade.

This unworthy kind of success we rather felicitously figured as Dagon, from an ancient god of the Philistines, and its votaries we named Dagonites, scathingly referring to them as such whenever we broke into print, though they didn't seem to mind very much. Naturally, the supreme symbol of our detestation was the amiable Bok of Philadelphia, and we would have gone to the stake rather than contribute anything to that person's publication—which signified to us all that was *bourgeois* and successful. I think now that we ought to have loved Bok for the intense satisfaction he gave us and the stern pride with which he inspired us to withhold from him our valuable Works. We never wearied of poking fun at him and his remarkable, original, and fully

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patented discovery, the Young Girl. We were fond of quoting, as the mental formula of Bok, typifying his unique gift of humor, a solemn warning from his journal, to the effect that "widows should not wear tan shoes." The youngest of us invariably referred to him with playful irony as "young" Mr. Bok. Such is the force of habit that I still so think of him, and, though I have seen pictures of the man representing him as entirely denuded of cosmic fleece, I cannot fancy him as ever having reached maturity. It is only just, may I not say, that art like Mr. Bok's should have the privilege of immortal youth!

Faith, I'm not so absurdly young myself, and the Holy Angels of Time have moulted not a few pinfeathers onto my head since first I began to gibe at this great man. O Mr. Bok! tell us your secret. At what magic fountain have you drunk—what charmed Bandusia,—that you go on forever, like Tithonus, immune against age and decay and Philadelphia, thrilling and correcting the bosom of the Young Girl—and always increasing your circulation!

I have said that we refused, from purely artistic motives, to contribute to Mr. Bok's journal; but, as I have also mentioned, we did very little contributing in any direction. However, in default of the detested bourgeois media of publication—I refer to the so-called standard magazines—we read our Works to one another, with sincere admiration of the same, or occasionally recited them to a bohemian

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company no less select and appreciative, over the pipe and the stein.

And how delightful those meetings were, with their frequent genuine surprises in the way of unlooked-for talent; with their readings from uncut leaves—leaves, alas, never destined to be cut, of authors never to become known of the great public, for which we properly loved and prized them the more; with all the grace of that only true bohemianism which foregathers with youth and hot brains, which believes all, condones all, imagines all, dreams all, promises all, hopes all,—but never really succeeds or arrives; glad and content, with its heart of youth, only to be on the way,—and the way so pleasant!

In those days I never saw one of us with a publisher's cheque,—a few of us, I am proud to say, have remained heroically shy in this respect. The mere fact would have been taken as a confession of mediocrity, and I may say there wasn't one of us whom such a thing would not have instantly damned and proscribed from our close-drawn circle of comradeship, enviously stigmatized by a hireling of success, as the "submerged literary tenth."

I'm not so sure now that there actually was—as we liked to believe and declare—a conspiracy of the publishers against us, but it never occurred to me then that our conspiracy against them was not a whit less effective and complete. Ha! Ha! that villainy which they did teach us we bettered only too well.

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Intellectually, we were of the Left Bank, a small detachment of that forlorn hope which gaily marches on forever to defeat—a tiny band of that mighty host, eternally foredoomed to disappointment, which only at rare intervals succeeds in throwing a vedette across the borders of the Promised Land of Art. . . .

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XVII

A BROTHER-AT-ARMS

DEATH elbows us every day in the street, stares out at us from the newspaper, comes in to gossip with the morning caller, salutes us like a mute sentry at the House of Life whereat we are all but passing guests. It is equal partner with life, consulted in every important conjuncture—a silent but inexorable partner, with the casting vote and the right to nullify. It is the eternal Trite and the everlasting Novel; the most paltry trap-door *dénouement* and the Supreme Climax; the one thing absolutely fixed and certain, yet as it touches ourselves, the most unexpected and dramatic of conclusions.

I had thought to have my friend review a book of mine just issued from the press, and had given word that a copy be sent to him. I seemed to see him receiving it and glancing through the pages with that quick judging eye of his, and thereupon I became painfully conscious of the many weak spots in the book which would challenge his censure. Then I reflected that his kindness kept terms with his

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integrity, and I began to look forward with a relishing zest to his written criticism. A few days and there came the word of his sudden death, the more sudden and shocking that I had not known of his illness. Now, alas, it falls to me to review the closed book of my friend's life with such heart as grief allows me for the office.

I may be pardoned for mentioning so slight a matter personal to myself in connection with this lamented and untimely death. It is to me a touching thought that one of the last tasks which the dying writer proposed to himself was to review a book of mine. Comrades-in-arms, as we were, with many literary loves and hates in common, I am glad to think that there was something to recall me to his memory before the end.

Percival Pollard was one of the earliest contributors to *Papyrus,* and his work did much to fix the note we aimed at from the beginning. Some of his finest essays on literature and art may be found in the back volumes of this magazine. It is hard to realize that his place at our little round table is vacant forever; that the pen which talked so wisely and well may talk to us no more.

His reputation was in no just measure to his literary talents. Regarded strictly as a literary critic, he leaves no superior in America and few worthy to rank with him as to scholarship, discernment and

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artistic sincerity. He was master of three literatures, English, French and German, and was yet as free from pedantry as any writer known to me. But there is still to be mentioned the quality or trait which set him apart from the run of literary critics, or those by courtesy so called. His hatred of bad literature amounted to a passion. Everybody but himself could see that it prejudiced his own interests—one cannot, as Pollard did, attack with impunity so much that is accepted and sanctioned by success. There is too little of the true literary spirit in this country to support the forlorn hope of which Pollard made himself the unflinching champion. Success is the American reply to everything—commercial success as expressed in tall figures and many editions, and in all the vulgarity of the *réclame*.

It may well be that Pollard was embittered by the unequal struggle: he hated literary fake, pretence and ineptitude, as I have said, with an austere passion which left him no rest, to the detriment perhaps of the more genial side of his mind and talent. In talks with him I frequently tried to make him see this, urging that he give more of himself, especially of his creative rather than critical self, and leave the public to learn its own lessons, as it must in the end. He would not admit that there could be any more important work for him than the exposing of literary sham, incompetence and unmerited

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success, so that to the very last he continued to waste style upon the styleless, learning upon the unlearned, brilliancy upon dunces, and uncommon powers of mind upon the mediocrities of current literature. Notwithstanding, those who knew him best were able to trace in his later work the growth of a more genial and catholic spirit. Also his criticism was becoming more constructive, though, as always, without compromise, and less directed at things which are of their nature without remedy. Finally, he was beginning to evince a prudent regard to that which he himself had to give to Literature, as is manifest from one or two recently published books that have added much to his reputation. And his mind was busy with many hopeful projects when Death took the pen from his hand.

Seven years ago he wrote in *The Papyrus:* "Real friendships are much like happiness: they are at their finest, their loveliest perfection when least considered. It is often indeed only when the friendship dies that one realizes what noble thing this was that has been and is no more."

True and pregnant words to which the memory of him now silent lends a solemn pathos.

In the same fine essay he confessed that he rarely made a friend, and it is certain that he was ordinarily cold and reserved, save with his intimates, the fastidiousness and nice election of his mind never being absent from his manner. But, like most men

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in whom the affections are not easily moved, he gave himself wholly where his choice of friendship fell, and sometimes returned rather more than due measure.

Finally, he is gone, with a stint of good work to his credit that will long keep his name a living reference in the mouths of men. I have no doubt that his austere example and precept will bear fruit in the gradual rejection from American literature of the unworthy things against which he inveighed, almost a solitary voice, until the end. Stricken as he was in the hour when life seemed to hold its best gifts in reserve for him, I can yet,—knowing the quiet courage of the man,—fancy him yielding to the inevitable without weakness or fear, in the spirit of those brave lines of Henley which he was wont to admire so much:—

Crosses and troubles a-many have proved me,
One or two women (God bless them!) have loved me.
I have worked and dreamed, and I've talked at will,
Of art and drink I have had my fill.
I've comforted here, and I've succored there,
I've faced my foes, and I've backed my friends,
I have prayed for light, and I've known despair.
Now I look before, as I look behind,
Come storm, come shine, whatever befall,
With a grateful heart and a constant mind,—
For the end I know is the best of all!

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BOOK THE SECOND

(TO ELLWOOD HENDRICK)

ADVENTURES IN LIFE

MY son, I would have you speak the Truth, the Whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth; and also I would have you bear in mind that the Business of this world is mainly carried on by Lying.

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I

CROSSING THE FERRY

WHEN the ferry-boat dug her nose into the icy flotsam that choked the slip and, after a crunching minute or two, swung into the broad channel of the North River and headed for the Jersey shore, the clocks were striking six. There was the usual crowd of home-faring passengers, clerks, laborers, shop-girls, business men, as eagerly impatient to get to the other side as if they never expected to make the trip again. Everybody was intent on making the wild scramble for the waiting trains which nightly signalizes the landing at the Jersey side, and, therefore, accepted the heat and discomfort in order not to lose a possible second. That is always the way of an American crowd—the most impatient yet the most enduring in the world.

I elbowed a scant passage through the press and reached the forward deck, where I ensconced myself in the bow of the boat and, turning my back to the lash of a stiff, frost-laden wind, faced the receding City. Instantly the spectacle that I saw

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drew from me a cry of wonder and astonishment which seemed to amuse the indifferent ferryites—hardened commuters, most of them—about me.

There was no moon and the stars were veiled by a sombre gray sky that held a threat of snow—a sky as void of color and beauty as the heavy water through which we were churning. The quick darkness of a February night already sat upon the harbor as we cleared the slip, and Liberty's torch shone like a lost star. But on the New York shore, what a glory of illumination! Those monstrous buildings, that in the full day offend the eye with their exaggeration, now appeared, with their thousand lighted and sparkling windows, like gigantesque towers of enchantment. The tallest of them thrust their torches in the very face of heaven, like the giants of old fable. Their crude though bold angularities, their affronting assertion of a noble art deformed to the uses of commercialism, their powerful and impudent defiance of the classic, their insolent vaunt of money,—these things were lost in the wondrously ennobling and beautiful effect of their many-twinkling lights, which mercifully left all that repelled in shadow. And suddenly it dawned upon me that I had never really seen these grand structures before, which the miracle of their transformation revealed as new and stupendous creations of the power of man. As I looked back toward the departing shore which holds half the wealth of the world, guarded

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now by these colossal sentinels of light whose shoulders seemed to support the sky, the thought came to me that no past age ever witnessed such a spectacle.

Think of it! Nor Tyre nor Sidon, those imperial cities of antiquity whose mere names overwhelm the imagination, had ever seen the like. Babylon, with her hanging gardens and all the wonders wrought for kings who ruled as gods, could make no such boast. Nineveh, with her hundred gates and her superb temples, never dreamed so glorious a dream. Egypt, with her sphinxes and her pyramids to whose building men gave their lives like the coral insect, fell far short of this in the tale of her marvels. Sardis and Persepolis had never dared to imagine symbols of such heaven-daring splendor. The glory that was Greece, the grandeur that was Rome, the prodigal imagination of the mad emperors, never conceived the simile of this superb spectacle which for an hour or so every evening quietly offers itself at the lower end of Manhattan.

We were now midway in our crossing, and the charming appearance of many illuminated harbor craft, with here and there a statelier vessel—some with a rainbow scattering of colored lights at their mastheads and in their rigging—together with the dancing effect produced by their being in motion, almost claimed the eye from the blazing Titans on the New York shore.

Here again was an exhibition of such beauty and

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splendor as never fell upon the as yet unclouded vision of the great poet who sang the launching of the thousand ships of Hellas, the wrath of Peleus' son and the sea-tossed wanderings of Ulysses. Such a spectacle as Troad or Piræus or Alexandria never saw in the palmiest days of ancient glory.

And I said to myself, crossing the ferry: Can it be true, then, that New York is without poetry when it is able thus to thrill the soul with such pictures of power and beauty? Is there no suggestion of poetry in that silent company of illuminated stone giants?—in this fairy harbor with its floating constellations and argosies of brilliant color?—in the grandiose but overwhelming figure of Liberty? Must the poet be voiceless in the presence of beauty and power manifested in symbols peculiar to this age and this land? Or is it not rather that we have no poet whose tiny soul does not shrivel up into impotence before your greatness, O Mannahatta?

I had reached this somewhat barren conclusion when the ferry-boat crunched brutally into the Jersey slip and I was whirled away, breathless and cursing, amid the frenzied rush of commuters.

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II

THE LIONS

DRINK and Desire are as two lions in the path of life, like those that affronted Christian on his way to the Delectable Mountains. Some men through good fortune, or deficiency of temperament, or mere cowardice, contrive to evade them; but the lot of most manly men is to meet and wrestle with them.

Those who come off whole are the better and stronger for the encounter, and this is the meaning of William Blake when he says, "The road to temperance leads by the House of Excess."

Sobriety, moderation, is impossible to the young man who is getting for the first time his fill of love and drink. Nature herself urges him on to intemperance, even though she shall whip him later for the sin with whips of scorpions. Yes, Drink and desire are two lions in the way of life, but some of us remember that after we had fought, and fought hard, it was pleasant to call a truce and make our bed with them.

For if you have never got drunk you do not

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know the virtue of sobriety and have no sound cause to plume yourself upon it. The true test of virtue is to conquer temperance through intemperance—to face the lions, like Paul at Ephesus—to lodge at the House of Excess.

So, if you have not been tempted and favored by women, your boasted continence is of as little account as that of a Trappist. Bring your chastity to the fire!

I guess there will always be Drink—that old lion! —in spite of the present determined attitude of the parsons of America. They may shoo him away from this place and that, and compel him to be wary in his foraging expeditions, but nobody really expects that they will bring his pelt home with them.

Nor yet that of his shyer mate. Nature has her own wise purpose in throwing us to both these lions, and we need not quarrel with her should we survive our trial. Yet I suppose the stoutest hero that ever overcame them doubted not that they took from him some virtue of strength and grace and fortitude, lacking which he could never again be the man he was.

The problem remains, how to evade the lions of Drink and Desire, or to get by the House of Excess without stopping or tarrying thereat. I think the parsons will hardly solve it for us by their present crusade against the "cakes and ale." Man has an incurable longing for the stuff o' temptation,

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for all daring hardihood and adventure, for the gay fooleries of two-and-twenty.

From tavern to tavern
Youth saunters along
With an arm full of girl
And a heart full of song.

Aye, and for those sober pleasures when, the season of careless youth being at an end, the sweets o' the night begin to come in.

Gillian's dead, God rest her bier,
How I loved her twenty years syne!
Marian's married, but I sit here
Alone and merry at Forty Year,
Dipping my nose in the Gascon wine.

In short, Nature will not be denied. Men of genius, of generous, bold or creative spirit have always enjoyed a certain license in this regard. The world has learned more from their intemperance in drink and love and other things than from the unshaken virtue of a million parsons. Great vices often presuppose great virtues, and the converse of this is true also. Nature is never less a moralist than when mixing in her alembic the materials of human greatness.

The artist may be said to claim a special exemp-

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tion, though always at his peril. But he who would recreate life, making such an image as shall challenge the reality, must live it to the full. Yet better were it even for the genius if he learn betimes that the road to temperance leads by the House of Excess and tarry not there too long on his journey. Many have so overstayed their time, like Burns and Lamb and Poe; and this is the scandal of genius and the edification of small minds.

The only man who should greatly regret having lifted the latch at that House is he who remains under a life-long necessity of intemperance. Most of us are the better for having caroused a while there, and then, admonished by the clock, paid our shot and come on our way.

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III

YOUTH AND FAME

MEMBERS of the late Mr. Vincent Crummles's Theatrical Company were in the habit of sneering covertly at the Manager's gifted daughter and remarking in significant asides that "Hinfant Phenomenons *will* grow old." Which the same observation I have often heard repeated with marked emphasis by Rupert the Red.

'Tis a sad truth and of wider application than the Provincial Stage. There was Sammy the Artist, whose youth promised me and the world so much, still uncollected and unrealized upon. Where are you, O Sammy, and what manner of blight has fallen upon those ardent hopes and dreams which we in days whilom shared with fraternal fervor! Alack, youth was our best capital—youth that is even a more beautiful and desirable thing than genius—and little enough we thought of it. How near seemed the heights of Art to us then—or rather how near did we bring them in the brave confidence and assured immortality of twenty year! It was all done in the

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puffing of a cigarette—like that! Art, my dear Sammy, as we conceived it, was merely an expression of our joy in our youth. I admired your sketches, though your genius fetched from the Scranton School of Art and owed nothing to the Latin Quarter. You praised my rhymes and essays and hinted not obscurely that they were the real attractions of a certain publication which shall be nameless (truth compels the admission that it survived the later defection of both our talents). I foresaw you in a very little while—say a year or two—rivaling Whistler, whom with an easy but not unbecoming familiarity—*tous deux de le métier, voilà!*—you habitually invoked as "Jemmy." You, not to be outdone in friendly appreciation, predicted the eclipse of Lamb or at least Stevenson, and the comparative extinction of Heine. Of course I didn't believe it for a minute—not even then—but . . . I liked you, Sammy!

And mark you this, should these lines chance to meet your eye: Would even the glory and success we promised each other in those far-off, foolish days be worth the hope and dream of youth that then were ours? Nay, I had rather lose the years between, O Sammy, to find myself again with you on an open road or breasting a windy hillside, swapping with you Theories of Æsthetics, jostling the Olympians from their stools, and settling the most delicate and age-long contentions of Art in the

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puffing of a cigarette. I know well that if I were to meet you to-day, besides other lamentable changes that the years have wrought, you would not have the hardihood to call Whistler "Jemmy," as you were wont with the gay license of youth and the freedom of a prospective rival. *Hélas,* Sammy, we used to talk much of the Future, that Land of Sunrise from which the gold and the splendor crock off as we advance. But, honest now, Sammy!—so far as we have gone—wasn't the Past, the blessed, blundering, ignorant, self-deceiving, hopeful Past, better, after all? . . .

And Jerome the Sculptor (also known as the Firbolg from a Celtic strain by which he came honestly), your brother in youth and promise, what news of him and the world? Himself a statue finer than any he will ever make, what a glorious thing he was to look upon, with his heroic thews and muscles, his light yet granite limbs, his deep-set, flashing eye, his teeth long and keen and white as those of an Irish beagle. Often in our country walks it was his delight to elude us and then, farther along at some unlooked-for point, startle us with wild screams and simian chatterings or with a sudden volley of harmless missiles. Fear of man or animal he had none. Once we were halted on a narrow road by a farmer's dog, half bull, half mastiff, and a terror to the wayfaring. Jerome stepped forward, stick in hand, and met the threat-

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ening beast with a fixed gaze (Sammy and I hastily sizing up the nearest likely trees). Then he said quietly, as if addressing a confidential irenic exhortation to the *canis horrendus:* "Run back to the house right away now, like a good little pup, *or I'll take your guts out and tie them around your neck!*" With one lamentable howl Cerberus turned tail and fled, giving us the road. . . .

Jerome could punch a bag equal to the Chocolate Cyclone, but he was gentle as a child and never used his great strength save in self-defense or protecting the weak. He could run ten miles without getting breathed. To see him vault a six-foot fence was to think of Kipling's hero who "trod the ling like a buck in spring." When the Onondaga Indians came to play ball with us (Jerome was a famous pitcher) they hailed him as a brother, and he seemed to have no trouble getting into the powwow game, though I have no reason to believe that Gaelic was the diplomatic language of the occasion. Afterward they adopted him into the tribe and when he played ball with them you could not have told him from an aborigine.

Well do I remember, O Sammy, your fierce jealousies, each contending for the priority of his chosen Art and little minded to concede anything to the other. It was Whistler and Rodin, mahl-stick and chisel; and often the dispute became more personal than academic. How foolish this hot rivalry must

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seem to you both, now that the years have brought in their impartial audit and—among other things—Rodin and Whistler stand where they did. Would you and Jerome shake hands and laugh over the times when each dubbed the other an Infant Phenomenon? I wonder!—'tis said that artistic jealousy is the bitterest and longest-lived of all the passions.

As for me, I will gladly make up any quarrel (saving my honor) with a comrade of youth. Yes, though I pride myself, like Samuel Johnson, upon being an honest hater and have never failed in strict courtesy to return the word or the blow. Moreover, he will not find me cold or nursing an ancient grudge should he remind me that nothing has occurred to diminish the fame of Lamb or Heine.

Finally, I make no difficulty of admitting (with Rupert the Red) that, however interesting Infant Phenomenons may be as a class, "they *do* grow old."

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IV

MILADY OF THE ANISE

AMONG the diversions of that joyous element known as the "Smart Set" there is one called chasing the anise seed bag which has always interested me for reasons to be set forth hereafter. The sport is in manner as follows (not being smart myself, instructed readers will pardon an occasional slip in my technique).

An expert rider, trailing from the saddle a bag of anise seed (which hath a peculiarly pungent odor exciting the hounds like the native smell of Master Reynard himself), goes over a selected course, no whit less difficult and daring than a fox would naturally follow in order to elude his pursuers. The rider being given a fair start, the dogs are allowed to take up the scent, and soon they are in full cry after the anise, followed as best they may by ye merrie ladies and gentlemen of the hunt.

The pleasure and success of the sport depend naturally upon the skill and dash of the rider bearing the scent. If he fail not in these qualities and have, besides, a thorough knowledge of the country,

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I am assured that the chase is little inferior to a *bona fide* fox hunt. For *the chase is the thing*, after all, whether or not a brush be lifted at the end thereof.

Now, the fox often gives ye merrie ladies and gentlemen a lively run for their money and then fools them at the finish; but his human understudy is rarely able to do this. However he may double and turn and seek to throw off the pack by devices worthy of a fox of quality, the dogs usually get him at last. For, as I have said, the anise hath a peculiarly pungent odor, and, once given the scent, the hounds seldom lose it.

Right onto this little word-picture of the aniseseed hunt I would fain tack a useful moral. There is a type of woman of whom I am always reminded when I read of the fashionable sport above described. We all know her, don't we? The woman who invites pursuit from many, who drops the scent now here, now there, and gaily leads the hunters on what she intends shall be a fruitless chase, a ha-ha and a mocking. But the merrie gentlemen straining and hallooing behind are not so biggod sure of that, eh, what! While the scent is given to them they will hang to the trail, and we all know the surprising accidents of sportsman's luck. In certain respects, too, it is an old observation that men and dogs are much of a breed.

Milady of the Anise (as I may call her) is not

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and does not mean to be a bad woman or a loose. She liketh the rapture of the hunted. She saith unto herself, "What sport to fool these idiots, for I am not their quarry,—I am *only the anise!*" Then she turneth in her saddle, showing her saucy croup to advantage, whereat the foremost pursuers swear a great oath and dig deeper into their stirrups.

Rare sport indeed! Milady's eye flashes and a brighter color springs to her cheek. Now she trilleth a clear laugh of invitation and defiance to ye merrie gentlemen of the hunt, at the same time scattering the seductive odor on the breeze. Tallyho! —hoicks!—hoicks! Whereat ye merrie gentlemen pluck up fresh heart of hope and spur on their steeds amain. . . .

I am sorry for Milady of the Anise, for though she believes that she is leading only a mock hunt, and has no idea of yielding her fair self, yet will it surely end in defeat for her. Ride she never so shrewdly, still is she riding for a fall. And, such is the hazardous fortune of the chase, it may well be that she shall fall at last a prey unto the most ignoble of the hunters,—nay, some ill-smelling varlet or groom of the stable. For the hunt of the anise brings all men to a level and she who drops the scent must abide the issue.

The trouble with Milady is as old as the hunting instinct in men or the flirting habit in women.

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Helen of Troy had it and Evelyn of Gotham is a famous modern instance. To be desired by all men, or as many as she can pass the anise to,—that is her passion and her ultimate defeat. She really means no harm to herself—and she is always resolved to sidestep at the critical moment. But she can't help feeling unhappy if any man within reach, on receiving the scent, fail to show the usual symptoms. She was born to tantalize rather than to gratify, and her rarest satisfaction is in knowing that many lusty gentlemen sweat with desire for her and bite deep into their pillows. There is, however, a sort of kindness in her cruelty, for she doth not deny them the small coin of love—the vague promise of a sheathed glance, the moth's kiss, trifling caresses, charlotte russe, as it were, in lieu of the strong meat of passion. A dangerous game, but Milady loves the excitement and she never really looks her best save when she is dropping the anise, with her shy smile expectant of new conquests, or when she hath, like Anne of Austria, a dozen men at heel.

Yes, I take leave to pity Milady, though she will not thank me. Dearly must she pay in the end for her facile triumphs, her lavish thrills and titillations, her hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly flirtation. Be her self-sought perils of the saddle or the sofa, of the parlor or the paddock, they can have but one conclusion. And that is of a kind that never shows her the winner.

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Poor, vain little feather-head! To be the chase and byword of many, to soil herself with their touch and that gross contact with desire which is even worse, she resigns the noblest dream that can possess a woman's soul. The great love absorbing self and summing up the whole of life, Now and the grand Forever, in one divine consecration, is not for her. How should it seek her among the crowd of idle or lustful followers, ever besieging her like the suitors of Penelope? Nay, how could its sweet and solemn voice be heard above the yelping chorus of the pack, the fanfare of the horns, and the tallyho!—hoicks!—hoicks!—of the anise-seed hunt?

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V

A WHITMANITE*

I AM a Whitmanite.

That is to say, I belong to the oldest family and social connection on this earth—the Joiners. There is only one other connection just as old and respected—I mean the Belongers. The doings of both these happy families make up the bulk of what is called history. In fact it is quite impossible to fancy the human race without them—cut out the Joiners and Belongers and you are back at the fifth day of Creation.

Ah, my friends, we are joiners and belongers, every one of us—our souls are ill-tempered for the Golgotha of loneliness and abandonment. The heart will and must put forth its tendrils, and it is by virtue of this strongest tendency of human nature that we are met here to-night in the common bond of love and admiration for a great lover of human kind. And, when you think of it, was there ever a joiner, a belonger like old Walt? Why, he joined the whole human race without exception, without

*Address to the Walt Whitman Society.

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distinction of color or creed; and he never asked man, woman or child for a certificate of character. His great loving heart had room for each and all—there was not a despised wretch wearing the semblance of man anywhere on the wide earth for whom he could find a harsher word than "Camarado"—a word forever consecrated by the touch of his spirit. Here was a joiner, a belonger indeed! The grandest utterance of human brotherhood, of human love and charity—the highest and noblest expression of true humanity, I dare avouch, that the ages have to record, is it not his?—

"Not until the sun excludes you
Will I exclude you."

Are not these words sublime enough to be written across the sky in letters of eternal fire? Grander have never fallen from the lips of saint or seer. Ah, my friends, on the day when men shall take these glorious words to heart and live up to the divine meaning of them there will be only one cause in this sad old world—that of God and humanity, and only one social connection, the Brotherhood of Man. . . .

To return to the lighter vein: I will not deny, my friends, that there is yet another reason why I am a Whitmanite—why, no doubt, several others here present are united to this Fellowship. Native mod-

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esty, the shrinking diffidence of a publisher, would indeed withhold me from saying more on this head; but truth and Horace Traubel urge me to keep nothing back. Well, then, my friends, since I must tell all, I am a Whitmanite for the further reason that I have experienced the great privilege of Cosmic birth. It is a very extraordinary privilege indeed, and I hate to claim it for myself in this brash manner; but truth and Traubel will not be satisfied with less.

Now some of you may wish to ask me, "What is this Cosmic birth of which we hear so much in the esoteric literature of the day, *The Conservator, The Papyrus,* etc.?"

I will try to tell you. When a man experiences the Cosmic birth, he becomes for the first time conscious of his relation to the All—not the "altogether," I hasten to assure you, but the Wholeness, the Oneness, the Unity of things. Up to that very moment he may have been, like our friend Le Gallienne, a poet of the *nth* power, or, like our beloved Traubel, a continuator of the Camden oracles—or, on the other hand, he may have been a mere pistareen —the word is Emerson's—given over absolutely to the smallest and meanest concerns and ranking cosmically with the tumble-bug. He may have chased the nickel with a pertinacity that held him even while he slept; he may have reckoned his own infinitesimal soul above the value of the Universe. No matter;

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when the Cosmic hour strikes, the man is new-created; his narrow personality falls off with all its petty aims; his little two-by-four soul shrivels up and blows away; he gets a larger soul, a grander personality; in short, from a parish pistareen (Emerson again) he is transformed into and remains a world-man.

It is also true that he usually gets a new and richer crop of hair. However, this does not always follow, for I see in this audience persons who have enough and to spare of the Cosmic fleece and others who would be glad to make a more strictly Comstockian exposure of their domes of thought. About the only thing you can safely say on this point is, that it might be risky to put yourself in the way of becoming a Cosmic, just for the hair. Still we expect it in the approved and authentic Cosmic, and when we find it in great luxuriance, conjoined with the rarest gifts and qualities, as in the case of—but I must not be personal.

The Cosmic birth may strike a man at any age between thirty and fifty—rarely before or after the latter term. It may occur with or without what I shall call woman-foolishness, but candor forces the admission that I have never known or heard of a Cosmic who lacked a strong tincture of that—indeed, as with the hair, some have enough to pass around.

One of the largest and heaviest books I ever saw,

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written by the late Dr. Bucke of Toronto, gives a complete account of the Cosmic life and traces its beginning and progress in the careers of many famous persons. The fact that Dr. Bucke was all his life a keeper of the insane has no bearing on the matter, one way or another; even though a captious criticism might argue, with some show of reason, that not a few of his subjects were what is called, in the higher technique, of the "bughouse" order. Besides, don't we know that the average man is always sane? (I speak frankly, for, of course, no specimen of him is with us to-night)—and the fact only serves to set off the occasional aberrations of genius.

So, my friends, we may as well admit that to lead the Cosmic life is to invite the world's censure and to be deemed more or less mad by all who tack closely to the conventional. Worse than this, if the theory of bats will not hold—the Cosmic happening, say, to show himself capable in ordinary affairs —then the world cries out upon him for a faker and a fraud. And should he lack the business sense, not knowing how to carry his money to the corner, the Philistines abuse him just the same. Some recent articles in the conventional press prove that we are hated quite as heartily for our very common failure as for our very rare success. Think of that!—they begrudge us even our failures!

On the whole, the way of the Cosmic life is a

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thorny road to travel. Of course, it has its alleviations and even its inspiring features—and then there is always, or at least usually, the hair—else so many persons would not make a free choice to travel it. I say so many, having regard to Dr. Bucke's immense catalogue and this large audience. Personally, I have known only about a half-dozen genuine Cosmics in all my life. I cannot say that they were happy in proportion to their uniqueness, and I should think the Cosmic habit a bad thing to pass around—certainly it would spell trouble for the average man.

For as no birth can be without travail and anguish, so the Cosmic process of re-birth is very painful to the person directly affected, and especially to his domestic relations, if he have any. Here in truth is the sore spot. You see, the Cosmic One has to face his old environment with a new soul, new dreams, new ambitions, new pretensions, and the Environment (which usually means the wife of his pre-Cosmic bosom) can't look at him with a straight face. Do you wonder—with all that hair? . . .

I have never heard of a woman who was not jealous of the Cosmic birth when it befell her husband; who did not rebel and struggle against it,—yes, and lie awake nights plotting to hamstring it. In most cases women like to keep on knowing the man they married—it seems so homelike and natu-

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ral; and they find it very hard to adjust themselves to the Cosmic fact or miracle—they want to be the only miracle in his life! . . .

From all this it is clear, my friends, that we Cosmics are not the happiest people in the world, in spite of the great notoriety and profit we occasionally achieve. One has to pay a price for being different from the rest of the world, and being different is the very essence of the Cosmic game. But it happens now and then—and this is the saddest of all—that a man will have paid the price, and a cruel price at that, only to find in the end that there really was no difference worth making a fuss about.

However, my friends, I give you this piece of encouragement: One may be a Cosmic without becoming a Whitmanite and—what some of you will like even better—one may be a Whitmanite without becoming a Cosmic. The Cosmic life is distinctly not in the class of contagious diseases, else by this time the whole town of Camden and a large part of Philadelphia would be hopelessly infected. You can't catch it by opening a window to the east and assuming a receptive mental pose. And this is well, for there never can be at one time more than a few persons fit to wear this double intellectual distinction—a distinction charged with peril and responsibility. Let these have their throne and the fierce white light beating thereon:—the rest of us

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may well be content to sit back and applaud as simple hearers and spectators, just plain Whitmanites, taking thankfully our share in the solace, the inspiration and the joy of this Fellowship, founded to perpetuate the loving legacy of the world's Great Comrade.

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VI

PRO AMICIS ET HOSTIBUS

LET me tell you a thing: I am glad of my friends and I am equally glad of my enemies—but don't say a word to the latter, for then they might want to be my friends, which would be a loss and an embarrassment! Truly I could not be what I am without both friends and enemies. Both are necessary to the inner *Me*. I went wrong about this for many years, but now I am wiser—I *know*. For we make no headway without opposing forces—he who thinks to hurt, helps me. I love my friends dearly, and yet, perhaps, I owe even more to my enemies—certainly I do in the way of mental stimulus. If I have gotten anything out of the fire, it was the hatred of an enemy that nerved me to the trial. One must confess it, there is something narcotic, emasculating in the goodness of one's friends. The man who makes me fight with tooth and claw has done me a rougher, yet withal a better, service than he who laps me in the soft Lydian airs of friendship. Anything that ministers to our self-satisfaction is an opiate—effort ceases with the

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spur of anxiety removed. And nothing will so foster a good healthy anxiety as to feel that you are waging a truceless battle with those who will neither ask nor give quarter. Oh, yes! I want my enemies to live on as such, nor would I wish, like the Hebrew King who walked with God, to bring down the hoar head of a single one of them to the grave in blood. Living, they do me good; dead, I should soon forget them.

Often I wrap myself in the benevolence of my friends as in an eider-down comforter—ah, how soothingly sweet to lull oneself to sleep thinking of those kind hearts! Alas! after such a night I find it hard to take up my daily task—in a world of milk and honey, where were the use of this painful effort? And, really, for a writing man or woman, one could not prescribe a more fatal diet than a steady course of kindness. If you doubt this, look at the literature of those swine of Epicurus who are buried to the buttocks in the trough of success and self-content.

Luckily, few of the scribbling tribe are subjected to a peril which would not merely threaten their literary style, but their very occupation as well. A little hate,—I would not say *too* much,—a bit of Swift's *sæva indignatio,* is an excellent corrective. For example, I was languid at my desk this morning; could not get into my proper vein—there was really nothing to write about, I said to myself, even while

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I went on spoiling good paper and rejecting sheet after sheet. Yet all this time I knew what the matter was—oh, yes! I knew it well, for the thing had happened before. Kindness! A sweet and gracious woman had just given me such proof of appreciation, of generous regard, of helpful sympathy, that I could not go on with my work for thinking of my happiness in having such a friend. And so, like Titus, I should have lost a day in mere self-complacency had not the post brought a sharp reminder that there were some enemies of mine abroad in the world—the world which in imagination I was about to swallow up as my oyster! It was the veriest trifle at that, a cowardly threat from some jolt-head *filius nullius* who dared not sign the name he wears without warrant of blood. But it won the day. I got back into form at once and, instead of writing a bitter denunciation of human kind, as you might expect, I did in fact turn out an admirable essay on the Christian obligation of loving one's neighbor as oneself, which drew tears from my own eyes. . . .

The superstition that genius is exempt from ordinary laws is still vigorous (though the debtor's clause is held in less honor than formerly),—and so Mr. James McNeill Whistler may urge his whimsical pretence never to have found or made a friend. A bit of irony that defeats itself, for has it not drawn many hearts to the unpatterned "Jemmy"?

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But indeed, if we would confess it, few of us have exercised, however slightly, the "gentle art of making enemies" without deep cause for regret. Time, too, shames the fighter in us. It has been said that hate is as exquisite an emotion as love itself, but I do not believe that, like love, it is immortal. Rational minds do not lay up grudges—there is so much to love in the world! . . .

I have had my own fights and plenty of them, chiefly because I must balk at the peck of dirt which is said to be every man's portion in this world. Some of my quarrels I looked for with a hungry zeal, and they are not all to be referred to a date when Plancus was consul; others, and perhaps the most serious ones, were forced upon me. Yet I now could wish heartily that my name might not provoke an angry or unkind thought in any breast. For I do not myself bear grudges, being of a race that forgives more easily than it forgets; and in all the world I have perhaps only one open account of this nature. It is a pretty bad one, too, because—I don't mind telling you—the party was a friend, in the Whistler definition, who after seeking to pluck out the heart of my mystery, then tried to crowd me off the Cosmos. This, if he had not been a fool as well as a knave, he would not have sought to do. For, given a just cause of quarrel, life is sweeter to those who wait for their revenge than to such as scrupulously observe the commandment of St. John.

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The only defect in the Christian heaven is that it affords no satisfaction of this kind—yet Lazarus was not without a thrill of it in Abraham's bosom!

But my friends, my *real* friends—how my feeling for them belies the Whistler cynicism! For I love them with a jealous fondness, and yet, as Cassandra was never believed for all her gift of prophecy, so, like the ill-fated daughter of Priam, I am often tortured by the coldness or incredulity of my friends. A few of them (whom indeed I love best of all) are foolishly timid because, forsooth, the good God gave me a beak and talon to defend myself. But never mind—the day is not far when they will be glad to give love for love in measure heaped and overflowing. . . .

Dear friends, kind enemies, when you shall both abandon me, then will it be time for me to lose hope and heart indeed!

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VII

TARTARIN*

A CONDENSED version of the following letter appeared in the New York *Sun* (1911):

To the Editor of the *Sun*—Sir:

Will you permit a faithful reader of the *Sun* to say that he has keenly enjoyed your occasional references to an illustrious person, identifying him histrionically, temperamentally and artistically with the immortal Tartarin of Tarascon? Especially as the undersigned humbly believes that he filed the first caveat establishing the said likeness, but is glad to waive whatever patent rights may be justly his in favor of the *Sun* and in the interest of the gaiety of nations.

Perhaps the *Sun* may be willing to reprint, for the sake of literary and historical accuracy, the original (as I take it) reference to the Illustrious One as the Tartarin of his day and country. With some

*After meditating deeply on the matter I have concluded that Mr. Roosevelt is rather an "adventure in life" than an "adventure in letters."

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necessary abridgment, it is as follows, extracted from an article headed "Tartarin-Teddy," which was published in one of the weekly issues of the St. Louis *Mirror* during January, 1900.

I sat in the Governor's reception room at the Capitol in Albany the other day, and watched Theodore Roosevelt. The chamber is magnificent and spacious, hung with portraits in oil of preceding executives, some of whom made a notable figure in history, and at least two of whom are not without contemporary interest. But there was present a nervous gentleman who claimed impatiently the attention from those worthies in oil and gilt. This nervous gentleman was none other than Theodore Roosevelt himself. Perhaps I was the only person of a large delegation who dared give a thought to aught else in that splendid chamber than the hero himself *in propria persona.*

This is not an interview with Theodore Roosevelt. I did not interview him, but was one of a crowd to whom he addressed a few words. But I took the liberty of observing him narrowly as he moved about among the guests in the conscious halo of his heroship. And what do you think was the idea that came to me in watching the famous Rough Rider who at this moment usurps so large a share of public attention?

Tartarin!

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Yes, by some subtle law of association the hero of fact was assimilated to the hero of fiction. I closed my eyes at the bizarre absurdity of the thought and, presto!—instead of the great apartment with its silent Governors in oil dominated by the restless little Governor in the flesh, I saw the famous garden of Tarascon, with its miniature baobab and other curious exotics. There was the very house with the Persian blinds, shining in the genial sun of the South—that sun which, the Master tells us, makes such unconscious liars (*menteurs*) of the brave people of Tarascon. Presently comes into the garden, with a stealthy air, as if he feared an ambuscade, a short, stout man, watering-pot in hand, a huge sabre at his side, the handle of a *casse-tête* peeping from his breast, and a revolver in either side pocket. I know him by the famous baobab. I know him by his armory; most of all, I know him by his ferocious *moue*. 'Tis he, the killer of lions! Involuntarily I rise to hail him, "Bravo, Tartarin!" —when lo! the house with the green blinds, the baobab, the mocking, southern sun, Tartarin himself, all vanish, giving place once more to a real hero, Theodore Roosevelt, and the Governor's chamber at Albany.

Not so fantastic as you think! Heroship is a ticklish and dangerous business. The memory of one day's scrimmage on San Juan hill is no effectual deterrent to the Muse of Laughter. Dewey had a

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far greater day, and a glory unique, yet in how brief a time Dewey has proved himself vulnerable—more's the pity! Roosevelt has not yet absolutely made an anti-climax, but his position is perilous. There is little doubt that the judicious grieve over him. His parrot-cry of "the strenuous life" has something of the naïve accent of Tarascon. Sound to the core is Roosevelt, and unquestionably a man of high ideals, yet withal a good deal of a *poseur*. The flamboyant publicity in which he lives seems the very breath of his nostrils. Heine says the first Napoleon had in his air and presence the repose of the Greek statues. Alas for Tartarin—I mean Teddy! So lamentably wanting in this heroic quality is the hero of San Juan hill that one would almost say, a *convulsionnaire!* Neurotic in a degree almost un-American, and then that terrible rictus corresponding to the Tartarin *moue*—here is indeed a type of hero strangely at variance with the received order.

But it is in his literary exploits that our Teddy has out-Tartarined Tartarin. You know Tartarin never wrote his own life and adventures, though he has had, in Monsieur Daudet, the most charming of biographers. Now, Teddy has done something worse than to take his own life—he has taken the life of Oliver Cromwell! When we consider the courage of the doughty little Rough Rider, entering the literary lists against a veteran campaigner like

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John Morley, we can no longer admit a doubt of his heroship. And yet Teddy's attempt to do the blue-nosed old Roundhead is not half bad. Of course, the critics will tell you it is totally wanting in that fine atmosphere which Morley is able to call up from many years of sustained study and literary craftsmanship. On these terms the rivalry between the great Englishman and the Rough Rider is broadly unequal. Howbeit, Teddy's literary equipment is not to be sneezed at, as all our Thebans are aware. Have not his secretaries allowed it to become known that the Governor reads "so much Latin and French" daily, together with the rest of his gigantic labors?

Malgré all that can be said, the American people are bound to have something to say about Teddy's future. It is undeniable that, due reservations made, they think pretty well of him. Is it because all America, like *toute France,* may be *un peu de Tarascon?*

* * * * *

To this matter, now ten years old, I would add a footnote. It asked rather more divination and a subtler analysis of character to discern the potential Tartarin in Mr. Roosevelt at the time I wrote than at any later period of the Great Career, and especially since the African anabasis wherein he actually emulated the exploits of Daudet's hero on

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the latter's own chosen ground. "All can raise the flower now, since all have got the seed."

Modestly, but not the less insistently, I press my claim. Let Jacob Riis and the Thousand Biographers voice their brazen demand that the adjective GREAT be consecrated to HIM alone among the worthies of history;—still I must beg to repeat, Messieurs, that it was I who first saw him as Tartarin, even as Daudet first saw his immortal prototype,—the one rôle he has played with continuous and consistent success, in which his greatness calls forth no envy and his laurels are voted with universal acclaim.

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VIII

AMERICANUS SUM

THE Goddess of Liberty looks decidedly asquint these days as she surveys the goings-on of some conspicuous Americans.

Mr. Freddie Mahtin, for example, who has been indiscreetly—if not indecently—exposing his mind in a popular magazine. I do not find Mr. Mahtin original as a thinker, or suggestive as a social prophet, or weighty as a political economist, or impressive as a publicist, or entertaining as a literary artist. To be strictly candid, Mr. Mahtin amuses me only in one respect—he is so frankly conscious of the plush on his chair.

Also, in this particular, he is really significant. In every paragraph Mr. Mahtin refers to his own envied "Class," the "highest social Class," the "Class I represent," the "Middle Class," the "Classes," etc., etc. I thought to count these references in a single article, but gave it up after a page or two.

That Mr. Mahtin should be invited to tell his Snob's Rosary in public seems to me an ominous

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matter. It is not very long since the word Class, in this invidious social notation, was justly taboo in our country, and no magazine of a popular character would have ventured to sprinkle its pages with the offensive term. Nor was it employed in general conversation—people did not talk Class because they did not think Class! Whence cometh the change? Surely, if there be anything hateful to the American spirit, it is this designation and all that it connotes. Mr. Mahtin, however, uses it with the assurance of an Englishman of caste writing to the London *Times*, and works it a good deal harder.

Nor has he been rebuked by the press generally, which, indeed, finds a profit in recording the trivialities of our make-believe aristocracy. I have seen many comments elicited by his articles, and some of them in a sarcastic vein, but not a single one which took up the point here noticed. Truly it would seem that Mr. Mahtin, spite of his absurd plush and piffle, had something worth while to teach us—if the "Classes" have at length really arrived.

What Mr. Mahtin did not need to teach us was that the American snob is the most offensive and peculiarly detestable sample of the genus to be found anywhere in the world. But his inept confessions abundantly emphasize the fact. A voluptuous egotism pervades them. They radiate Guppy. This daring regenerator of Society, this hater of

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Heliogabalus, this lover and would-be restorer of our simple republican traditions, is pruriently anxious to prove himself of the purple. How virile and dignified is the expression *"my own set"* on the lips of a man! And how keen a satire Mr. Freddie Mahtin unconsciously offers on the present estate of the American Idea and the decline of taste and decency in the American periodical press!

Mr. Mahtin's effort would have charmed a certain Middle Class person of the last century, the author of the "Book of Snobs" and the creator of "Charles Yellowplush," for the light which they throw on *his* pet province. Mr. Thackeray, it will be recalled, wrote avowedly in the character of a snob the better to identify himself with his theme. Mr. Mahtin would probably disclaim any such intention, but curiously enough it amounts to the same thing. For he is only interesting, if interesting at all, when he speaks and *thinks* (if to accuse him of *thinking* be no violence to the Spirit of Truth) in the manner peculiar to his Class.

In Park Row, New York, and the regions contiguous thereto it used to be an article of faith that Mr. Whitelaw Reid's spinal column, like the brain of the "no biggod nonsense" young man in Dickens, had been frozen on the night of his birth and never got thawed out subsequently. Whether the rigidity of Mr. Reid's vertebræ was due in greater part to

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natural constitution or to the indurating effect of worldly prosperity, is now an idle question, and an impertinent one as affecting our late Ambassador at the Court of St. James's.

This stern and unbending republican rose at once to the highest favor among the aristocratic, royalty-loving English by his judicious and splendid hospitality and his ill-concealed contempt for his own country. Patrician airs seemed native to the proud American, and the celebrated spine became wondrous flexible in a court dress. To be sure, these things are not distinctly novel in an American Ambassador at St. James's, but it must be allowed that Mr. Reid carried them to a perfection heretofore unknown. In a strictly political sense, it may be said that Mr. Reid's presence at the English Court offered a complete reparation for the revolt of the American Colonies in 1776.

But Mr. Reid is never so admirable and so splendidly un-American as when he interprets the "conservative attitude" toward literature or politics or what not, for his English hearers. Thus, I find that he has been giving his views on Byron before the University College of Nottingham, the occasion being the inauguration of a Chair of English Literature in honor of the great poet. And that may be another reason why our Goddess of Liberty is looking asquint.

The American Ambassador in his public expres-

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sions is presumed to speak for the American people. Now, it is safe to say that no American has ever given utterance to so much that is hostile to the American spirit as did Mr. Whitelaw Reid in his Nottingham address. Yet that address has been printed extensively in this country, with perfunctory newspaper praise; but I have not seen a single honest comment thereupon. To judge from the attitude of the press, Mr. Reid fairly spoke the mind of his countrymen with regard to Byron. If so, then God help America!

But it is *not* true, Reid and the stupid press to the contrary notwithstanding. We are not a nation of snobs and degenerates—at least not yet!

What says Reid of the greatest liberty-loving poet in English literature? That his work was the "literature of revolt and for the most part of unwise and unsuccessful revolt. It was revolt against society; revolt against those features of morality on which society sets up the most exacting standards; revolt against his order; revolt against theology if not against religion; and, finally, revolt against many established opinions, most established institutions, and against some established governments. Still his revolutions were all failures."

This quotation gives the tone of Mr. Reid's estimate of Byron and his influence. It procures him at least one unenviable distinction: he is the first

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American of note to censure Byron for *revolt against his order!*

But the stern American Tory goes even beyond this in passing sentence on the Great Poet. He cites, with implied disapproval, Byron's confessed—*"plain, sworn, downright detestation of every despotism in every nation."* In the same way he rebukes the noble Poet for his sympathies with Ireland which led him into "wild outbursts against Castlereagh."

Castlereagh! The contriver of the infamous Act of Union! Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh, on whose self-inflicted death Byron penned the bitter epigram—

So he has cut his throat at last—What?—Who?—
The man that cut his country's long ago!

Mr. Reid's own sympathies are plainly with Castlereagh and established government, and one can hardly doubt that, had he lived in the fine old Tory times "when George the Third was king," he would have done his utmost to oppose and hinder a certain George Washington fighting for liberty. There were many of his kidney in America in those times that tried men's souls, and they were the cruelest enemies the patriot fathers had to face.

Among the memorable works of this proud American, along with his persecution of the senile

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and broken Greeley, the world will not soon forget that he tried to raise his insect voice against the great Poet of Liberty who sang—

Can Europe find no Champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprang forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourished in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast or Europe no such shore?

That the noble example of Mr. Whitelaw Reid in casting off the degrading superstitions of American liberty goes not wholly without fruit is evident from the recent inspiring action of a scion of the House of Astor, transplanted to England but deriving its enormous revenues from this despised country. Young Mr. Astor voted in the Commons against the bill which aims at curtailing the power of the Lords and enlarging the liberties of England. He has never acquired American citizenship, having been brought up in England, while his father, William Waldorf Astor—the most superb specimen of the *snobiscus Americanus* known to this generation—has renounced it. Is it any wonder that Liberty should be looking a bit queer? . . .

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IX

THE EXPATRIATES

NOWHERE does snobbery spread a more seductive lure for the simple than in the Foreign Sections of the New York papers, especially the large Sunday issues. It is well known to the initiate that the newspapers and the correspondents turn a pretty penny by those "write-ups" of Americans living or visiting abroad, which are the main feature of those so-called "cable specials." In plain words, they are *paid advertising* matter, the subject furnishing the *quid* while the newspaper provides the *quo*. And very high they come, these emollients to female vanity and snobbishness, as they are for the most part, since both the business office and the correspondent must have their account. But the climber and the *parvenue* never stick at the price of such gratification. Since the beginning of things, have not women sold their souls to please their pride and vanity? . . .

Commonly the sort of stuff made in Europe as described (though sometimes it is wholly cooked

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and served on this side) is fake or fiction of the baldest kind, or at best a bare groundwork of fact raised to the plane of romance and decorated with all the "frills" of the writer's imagination. As I have said, only the most ingenuous readers are taken in thereby, since, with the increase of rich American vulgarians demanding treatment, the practice is become more of an industry than an art. There is, for instance, the Duchess di Spagatti, a strong and almost regular Sunday feature, whose mamma, herself not innocent of social ambition, is married to Mr. Seiglup, the big dry goods man. Seiglup being a liberal advertiser, the Duchess thereby gains a point over her rivals. Her letter-press is usually set off with striking pictures two or three columns deep, showing the Duchess in court costume, in riding habit, etc. Sometimes we get a view of her imposing Roman palace (the Duke before his marriage was as poor as a facchino and had been turned down by several eligible American fortunes), or of her seigneurial estate in the Carpathians. We read that she plays the *grande dame* to perfection, with no reminiscence of her democratic up-bringing and not a hint of the bargain counter; that she is greatly admired at Court and much sought after by the nobility (Papa Seiglup's cheque book might be appealed to in confirmation); that she is doing wonders in the way of helping and elevating the peasantry of her several estates. And so on, etc., etc.,

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the chronicle appearing from time to time with almost the regularity of Papa Seiglup's "ads" and with an occasional identity of style.

But why should the Duchess di Spagatti be held up as a shining example to the young women of America, especially those who have dollars to exchange for the paste and tinsel of nobility? I submit that there is no plausible excuse for thus giving publicity to her triumphs and virtues, and, though the story is set forth with considerable art, the points are overstressed and the note of trade is unmistakable.

There is also, for another type of expatriate, our charming and perennial friend, Mrs. Brown-McGennis, wife of the American consul at Pumpernickel (you have read about the place in Thackeray). McGennis was formerly billeted at Wiesbaden, but the transfer was made in deference to his social proclivities, which would have done honor to the late Captain Costigan. A good fellow that same McGennis, with a genius for irrigating the desert sands of diplomacy. I wonder why he isn't promoted to a first-class mission. What sticks those fellows are in Washington! But we were talking of his wife, to whom, *entre nous,* McGennis owes not a little of the greatness which he has attained.

Not so long ago we heard of Mrs. Brown-McGennis, *via* the Sunday papers, as having chal-

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lenged the outspoken admiration of his late British Majesty King Edward the Seventh at Marienbad. At this famous watering place, as you know, his Majesty was accustomed to relax the rigors of royalty and meet informally many persons, the pleasure of whose company was denied him at his own Court. Well, the King is unfortunately no more, but Mrs. Brown-McGennis goes on, ever admirable and ever admired. Only the other day I saw a long write-up of her, with portrait, in the Foreign sheet of a great New York paper (it must have cost Milady a trifle). From this faithful oracle I learned how she has elevated Pumpernickel socially to a point of almost Ministerial splendor—and, do you mind, McGennis would be a Minister soon enough if merit had its due, and especially if his wife's qualities were appraised at their worth. Here is a woman of brains and money and ambition, who is neither old nor ugly,—a woman accustomed to the wide spaces and the unconventional freedom of America, who has moreover filled a foremost place in the great crusade of her sex for the suffrage, etc. —I say, fancy such a woman shut up in a stuffy little German consulate, presiding at a small round of social inanities while she is actually pining for real worlds to conquer. Alas! the old days in America were better, after all, when in her bright, forward way she led the assemblies of women demanding political rights, went to conventions in dif-

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ferent parts of the country, and had her picture and her speech in the countless newspapers of the land. If there were only a chance of McGennis being advanced to an Embassy of the first class! But there be some things that even a clever American wife cannot do for a man—and here's the motive for this expensive write-up in the Foreign Section! . . .

Liberty sheds no tear as she looks at Mrs. Brown-McGennis pouting and angry over her balked ambition. She sheds no tear, but the little squint of her eye takes on an expression distinctly ironical. Which persuades me that Miss Liberty reads her Sunday paper with marked intelligence.

Why is it that in spite of so many disasters, disgraces and disappointments the American heiress and her mamma are as eagerly intent on securing a titled match as ever in the past? The answer is to be found in the factitious romances of the Foreign Section. A titled husband may be the rottenest risk in the world, but he offers a bait to female vanity of the dollared American sort which, social values remaining as they are, can never lose its attraction. Aristocracy is an invention of women; they are always composing a social hierarchy, whether in the Faubourg St. Germain or the Back Bay district, in Belgravia or in South Brooklyn, on Upper Fifth Avenue or in Canal Street. Therefore, American women of the moneyed Class (to quote Mr. Fred-

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die Townsend Mahtin) will never cease to pant after foreign titles for themselves or their daughters as the hart panteth for the water brooks. For most women are like children and savages,—seduced by a glittering bauble, while their men folks are commonly foolish and indulgent enough to get them the worthless thing they covet.

To this rule there is hardly an exception among Americans. I have heard Mrs. Brown-McGennis, in her woman's rights period, declaim like a second Madame Roland against the wealth-worshipping and title-hunting ladies of the Four Hundred (she never had the entrée *there*) and paint with vivid eloquence the dangers which they threatened to the Republic. Well, McGennis and she were hardly warm in their official nest at Wiesbaden before she married off her only daughter (by her first consort, you know), a chit of a girl, but with a good solid dowry of American dollars, to a doltish German officer with one of the seventeen hundred minor degrees of Teutonic nobility. And deuced glad she was to grab Fritz, too, though it sentenced the poor girl to a horrid exile in Equatorial Africa. But to be noble and titled, though sprung from a world of nobodies, is not that something to make a sacrifice for?—I think I hear the staccato tones of Mrs. Brown-McGennis. . . .

Have we not lately seen a man of many millions marry his daughter, scarcely out of the nursery, to

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an English nobleman nearly thrice her age? A man, too, whose family has been disgraced and humiliated before the world in a specially odious manner by a previous marriage of this type. One might have thought that here was one hard-headed American who had had enough of the foreign nobility in the person of his feather-headed scamp of a brother-in-law, and enough of notoriety which had covered his name with slander and ridicule in every corner of the world. Yet he traded his dollars and his daughter for the first good title that came along—and who but wondered at the exceeding courage of the man! . . .

The woman-worship in this country, which is a stock source of wonder to Europeans, began with the rise of large fortunes in the last generation. About the same time that the American got hold of "big money," he discovered sex in a finer hedonistic sense than it was known to his fathers. It suited his vanity also to discover higher intellectual qualities in the weak beings who were to show off his wealth. So his pride and his pleasure went together, and by dint of both he set up the grotesque adoration of women,—that is to say, of mental and physical inferiority,—which excites the derision of Europe.

That is a strictly true but unpoetical statement of the genesis of the American Goddess whom Gibson

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has crayoned and the magazines have "featured" into a season of popularity. She was always a sham and an unreality, but to pretend belief in her is still a badge of the social elect and a stigma of the class-conscious.

Nor God nor man had ever previously looked upon anything like the spectacle of the American woman in the pride of her false goddesship. Eheu! what she cost us! The sacrifices made to her diseased vanity and restless ambition, the fortunes bartered blindly away for worthless gewgaws of rank and title, the tragedy and disgrace which constantly attended her giddy attempts to shine and conquer in foreign spheres,—are not these things familiar to all who can read the penny prints? Nay, they are so staled through repetition that they no longer interest us or challenge the spirit of satire.

Yet it seems a pity that we have amongst us no Thackeray capable of depicting the rise and fall of the American Goddess in a masterpiece like "Vanity Fair." The time is ripe for him, since, for all artistic purposes, her epoch may be regarded as complete. The factitious romance with which she was long surrounded by sentimentalists like Bret Harte has been rudely torn away, exposing the scandal and meanness and tragic humiliation behind. Nobody believes in the poor Goddess any longer, and she is about to return, humbled and chastened, to her natural status as an average woman and a

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mother of children to average men. In which estate she will rediscover her happiness and her proper use in the world.

Summing up our amiable madness, we see that to the present hour it has resulted chiefly in amusing the cynicism of Europe; pouring an ocean of American money into gilded foreign ratholes; setting up a craze of rank-worship and snobbery at home; cutting down the natural birth-rate and popularizing that polite form of prostitution, the childless marriage; multiplying divorces and the number of the connubially unfit; furthering the idleness, dawdling and dissipation of so-called society and club women; producing a breed of un-Americans; fostering a silly literature unequaled in the annals of publication; vastly furthering the propagation of female fools.

Hail our American Goddess ere she passes! We shall not look upon her like again.

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X

OUT OF THE EAST

If the recollection of a cocktail—that cold amber serpent with a ruby at its heart—should ever sting thee in the peace of the cedars, think of me and be wise. Thou art now, oh my beatified brother, some six or seven thousand miles from hell (as the crow flies)—wouldst thou come back for a Manhattan?

ALLAH be praised who giveth and taketh the years, 'twas in December, 1904, I wrote these lines to my inestimable friend and brother, Ameen Rihani, poet, philosopher and mystic, at that time resident in Lebanon the holy, in the land of Syria. Need I recall him to the faithful readers of *Papyrus* who have tasted the sweet libations of his Muse, that sometimes have the bitterness of things over-sweet?

Never had I seen my brother in the flesh, though he had written me many charming letters in which the gentle melancholy of Amiel was blended with the lyric scorn of Heine. Yet was he once a dweller in Brooklyn the unblest, and the thirsting Pleiades of Manhattan, long a nursery of neglected genius, knew him of yore. A translation of Abul-Ala, an

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Arabic poet, no less deserving of immortality than he of Naishapur, first brought him into my ken. Thence began the correspondence alluded to which continued long after Ameen had shaken the dust of the Occident from his feet and set up his tent under the cedars of Lebanon.

Believe me, my thoughts were anywhere but in Syria, land of roses, one day in August last, when the telephone tinkled and a musical, exotic voice saluted me with these fervid greetings:

"Mikhael! it is I, thy friend and brother, Ameen Rihani, alive, *billah,* alive!—and come back for that Cocktail. Wilt hasten and have it with me, Mikhael?—thou wilt also see a pair of Black Eyes that are worth a journey from Syria to behold. Come quickly, then, O my brother—we are at the caravansary Al-Goddam . . . I mean Algonquin."

There be some things which really admit of no argument, and among these I reckon an invitation to drink with a man who has come over half the world's breadth to see you. I consented at once to the Cocktail and also to dine the same evening with my friend and the pair of Black Eyes.

Eagerness and haste bear another gloss in the East and are quite different from our Western notion of the things signified. The Oriental hurries neither to his wedding nor his execution, if he can help it. This attitude, which we call fatalism, has

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its charm; also its inconveniences, as shall be narrated.

I had begun to think that Ameen had rightly named our appointed place of meeting the Al-Goddam, so long was he in making an appearance. At last he came, radiant, with arms thrown wide and such a convincing warmth of speech and manner as no ordinary feeling of annoyance could resist. A lithe, medium-sized man, as handsome as Daudet and, as I thought, much resembling him, with the like extraordinary tangle of dark hair that seemed to grow out from itself, *a suo vigore,* without reference to the stem or head beneath. A Syrian, with the dark and delicate lineaments of a race never numbered with the strong, but which still preserves the distinction of thought; akin to the Greek in subtlety and weakness, to the Celt in enthusiasm and inaction.

Forthwith we ordered the Cocktail—"the same, Mikhael, that you wrote about in your talk-of-the-side." Accordingly we made it a Manhattan, and Allah of his inscrutableness gave us a speedy desire for another, perhaps one more after that—Three is a sacred number in the hierology of the East.

Meantime we talked like lovers reunited, also like poets who are sure yet solicitous of each other's admiration. My friend had come back to New York in order to get his Great Work published, one that spanned the intellectual consciousness of the

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East and West. I was planning another revival of *Papyrus,* on whose demise, Ameen assured me, there had been lamentation in Ramah, and tears in Beyrout and Damascus. Naturally I yearned over these tidings—the more remote, the dearer the appreciation.

All this took time (perhaps there was another Cocktail, I'm not sure). The dinner hour was passing and still the Black Eyes did not appear. I felt the infraction of Oriental decorum, but a healthy appetite would not be silenced. I thereupon said something about our not being able to get a table at the restaurant where we were to dine. The thing was likely enough. Ameen poured forth apologies. "A thousand pardons, Mikhael, I will telephone the Gazelle at once. She is down town and does not know that you are now with me in the Al-Goddam. *Billah,* but she will be the rejoiceful one!" And away he went.

Hunger gnawed my vitals, but I almost forgot it when Ameen returned, not too soon, with a joyous light in his eyes.

"She is coming, Mikhael, on the wings of her desire—I mean a taxicab. Oh, my friend, in her you will behold Syria herself. Shall we not have another Cocktail-of-the-side-talk while we await her?" . . .

Syria did not belie her advance notices. Her eyes were the largest and blackest ever seen outside the

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Mahommedan heaven—each a night of a single star.

"But I'm not a Syrian," she said, when we were at length cozily seated at a desirable table, not too near the music. "Richard of the Quest had a happier inspiration—he called me Arabia."

I raised my glass to the more fortunate artist. "Let me call you Arabia then; from such a source it is an honor to borrow a verse or a compliment."

The great eyes closed and opened, making midnight and noon. A slow smile gave gracious consent.

At this point Ameen, stung to artistic consciousness by the mention of the English writer, demanded from me a critical estimate of the latter's poetry.

"My dear Ameen," I parried, "speaking of the English avatar of Hafiz, I'm not sure that he has ever given us anything finer than your own 'Hanum'!" And I quoted:

Hanum, your eyes are brighter far
Than when in mine they swam one day;
I wager every moon and star
The tax of lustre to them pay.
And those who dared with them to jest,
Where are they now, those lovers slain,
Who whispered dying on your breast,—
"O Hanum, shall we meet again?"

The poet's eyes glistened with proud joy and Arabia bent upon me her most lustrous smile of the

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evening. "O my friend Mikhael," exclaimed Ameen, "how magnanimous of you to remember my verses! Dost note this wondrous thing, dear one?" he said in a half-aside to our fair companion. "Mikhael prefers the Syrian bulbul to the English lark."

I blushed a little at the ruse, but it was perfectly successful, and all's fair in love and war or saving a dinner party. By a neat turn I had secured the happiness of three persons and the escape of two—Mr. LeGallienne and myself.

Did you ever know a poet to be satisfied with a single quotation from his Works, either in his own mouth or that of another? If you did, Allah hath reserved you for a peculiar destiny. Certainly he was not of our company that night. When a little later I asked Ameen if there was no patriotic party in his native land, no Young Syrian aspiration for freedom such as had but lately dethroned the Tyrant of the Bosphorus and kindled a too quickly languishing flame among his subject peoples, he rose fully in his place, and, to no other accompaniment than the flashing of storm-signals in the eyes of his Arabia, intoned the following spirited stanzas:

O Freedom, in thy cause I fought,
For twenty years I fought in vain,
And in my burning bosom nought

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But worthless trophies now remain.
Yet in my heart I hear a cry
That never there makes vain appeal:
I would once more beneath thy sky
Brandish my sharp and shining steel!

The purest love I give away,
The bliss of it I set at nought;
Again I'm on my wayward way,
Seeking what I have often sought.
My wounded hopes, my bleeding ties
No peace inglorious e'er shall heal:
I would once more beneath thy skies
Brandish my sharp and shining steel!

The waiters, as well as some noisy but disinterested friends of liberty, joined in the fervid applause which these stirring lines evoked. The poet sat down, pale and trembling, but with no abatement of his martial air.

I now perceived that the hour was very late and yet there was manifestly nothing to do but move on the Turkish oppressor. The inconveniences of such a proceeding seemed less to me at that moment than the patriotic urgency of the step.

However, I put the matter up to Arabia, who for some time had been gradually taking command of our forces. In a manner quite inexplicable she turned us from our warlike purpose and steered us

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to a taxicab. Admirable Arabia!—I shall remember thy wisdom as long as the beauty of thine eyes.

Late next day I received this note from my friend.

"MIKHAEL:

"Oh, thou damned seductive Irishman! I deserve all the torments of Eblis—and I am suffering them all—for having trifled with that cold amber serpent with the ruby in his midst, thy Cocktail-of-the-side-talk. He is now coiled about my vitals, and yet, son of misery that I am, I have a horrible desire to swallow more of him. Tell thine erring friend what to do ere Allah blast thee for a tempter! I am now at the Al-Goddam and fear that the Cocktail may attack me at any moment. Or, better still, come and help me to subdue the monster. . . . Mikhael! your friendship is as dear to me as a corner of Al-Jannat or a sunset in my beloved Syria, but what execrable poetry you recited last night!—was it your own or LeG.'s? And what Koran-cursed nonsense that was about freeing Ireland!—it might have landed us all in Jefferson Market. Never mind, I forgive you that and all else, if you will but come to me. My agonies are great, but I live, *billah,* I live! AMEEN."

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XI

A HUMBLE LIFE

THE kindest, gentlest man I have ever known is dead. It would be a wrong to his memory to name him here, for such virtues as his flourish only in the neglected, unsought places of life, and to drag them into the light of publicity were a kind of profanation. Yet it causes me a pang to think that so much goodness should be withdrawn from the world and no sign or token left thereof. Perhaps it will be forgiven me if, very simply and without art, I jot down here a few slight memories of what seems to me, in spite of its obscure and humble setting, a life worthy and beautiful. But there is no story—no hero: let those who seek such close the page.

He was born into a large family, some sixty years ago, in Northern New York. That part of the country was wild and unsettled then; manners were ruder, life was harder in every way, and stern work was necessary to keep the wolf from the door.

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Probably "work" was the first word he heard, and it may well have been the last.

He was the smallest and frailest of a half dozen sons (there were daughters, too), but even as a child he had "chores" to do, and thus the keynote of his life of constant labor was set. There was a little schooling in his early years, a very little indeed, for his help was needed; and, besides, the family moved about a good deal. The father was an active, industrious, headstrong man, holding to his opinions with great tenacity and singularly undiplomatic in the expression of them. In such communities it is sometimes advisable for a man of this type to migrate, if he cannot win his neighbors over to his own way of thinking. Old John (as we may call the father) would not weaken the least bit, even when, on one occasion, during a heated campaign, his neighbors proposed to string him up as a violent and irreclaimable Whig. But presently he dug up stakes and "lit out," without any manner of compulsion, however;—you know how such things arrange themselves! All this shifting and uncertainty naturally set young John back in his book-learning, while giving him more to do than was strictly necessary in the School of Hard Knocks. People didn't much consider his size or weakness, and, to do him justice, he would have felt hurt if they had. You see, his spirit was full size.

Old John included among his lighter and more

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amiable traits a genuine love for music—he had a capacity in this way, too, which never got him into trouble with his neighbors and may well have palliated his political shortcomings. Old John was, in fact, a rattling good fiddler, though he didn't work at it as a trade, mind you; and he was in frequent requisition at barn dances and other such merry-makings. I have heard young John tell, with a quiet humor characteristic of him (when he himself was somewhat in years), how once he went with his father to a dance, and old John was given too much apple juice and turned sick while playing the "Money Musk," and was forced to relieve his stomach into a very tall white plug hat (the pride of its owner and the wonder of the village) which had been placed near him for safe-keeping (the fiddler being spared in most emergencies). Young John was a very small shaver at the time, but he never forgot the look on the man's face who owned the plug hat. . . .

Young John, by the way, had no small share of his father's musical knack: he became in time a capable musician, transmitting the talent in turn to some of his children. I have seen few pleasanter sights than young John playing a duet with his daughter; bass-viol and violin. As a boy myself I loved to watch him play on the huge fiddle, which overtopped him several inches; and it seemed to me that he was proportionately important in the or-

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chestra. He never made any claims of that sort himself.

To resume. Old John was by fits and starts farmer, carpenter, and canal boatman. The Erie Canal was then in its heyday and good money was made freighting stuff along the great waterway. Old John finally took to "boating it" regularly: he owned his boat, which was manned by three or four of his boys. A profitable season made things easier in the long winter following. This was not a bad time to look back upon, with the boys and girls all singing and playing and old John occasionally unbending from political discussion to take a hand in the revels. There was much hearty affection in this plain American family, as I knew from the moisture that often came to young John's blue eyes in telling of those far-off times.

So young John, barely in his teens and very small for his age, drove a mule-team on the canal towpath long days and longer nights, from Buffalo to New York and back again. Hearing him tell of this as a boy myself, I used to envy him the delight and adventure of the experience.

There was the winding canal brightly flowing in the sun, yet full of dark and whispering mystery in the long night watches; and there was the silver stream of the Mohawk dotted with no end of green islets, keeping it company for many a mile of its wayfaring. What beauty in the dawns, what sol-

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emn splendor in the sunsets, which even a very small boy, often tired and hungry, would not fail to mark and remember! (Young John was never to go far from that quiet river—it was to become, in very truth, part of his life.)

There were the Sixteen Locks with their peril and excitement, the crashing oaths of the bargemen, the fierce answering shouts of the locktenders, especially when there was, as often, bitter strife among the boats waiting to be locked through; with now and then a desperate battle, resulting sometimes in broken heads, but mainly an affair of noise and uproar; enough to make a boy's heart leap out of him for mingled fear and delight. There was the dark and bloody ground of West Troy, memorable for many a scrimmage and angry dispute at the "weigh-lock" (the business of canaling being one impossible to carry on without rage and profanity). Then there was the Nine-mile level—think of that to brag of to stay-at-home boys! And the Wilderness, where, in the long night tricks, your heart often stood still at some strange noise or murmur, as of *someone* or some *thing* just behind your back, and you were mighty glad to have your big brother yell at you from the helm—"Johnny!—go on with your line," adding, perhaps, other cheerful expletives. And, best of all, there was the happy, idle cruise behind a dancing tug from Albany down the wide

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Hudson to that whole world of wonder, the great city of New York.

So I envied young John when he told us his adventures, and I was much older ere I understood how hard the life must have been to him, a frail young lad, with its privations and real dangers. But I don't remember that he ever complained, as well he might. Many a time, while driving half-asleep at night, his team would walk into the canal, taking him along with them. Then a wild scramble for life while the crew, paying very scant attention to him, would exert themselves to save the threshing, floundering animals. There were nights when this happened not once but twice—and he had not even time to change his wet clothes.

I loved as a boy to hear young John tell of these and similar his adventures on the tumultuous, though not exactly trackless, Erie Canal. Chiefly because they were the only adventures of the story-book kind that his life was to know. There remained for him only the life-long adventure of hard work and honest poverty.

Old John gave up boating in course of time and went on a long cruise by himself, whence he sent back no account of lock-tolls or other charges. Young John thereupon left the canal, but stayed very near the river, which he had learned to regard as a friend during many solemn morning and evening hours. "I will never desert you, John," it

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seemed to say, "though the time will come when you will leave me, like your father before you."

So young John married and settled down on the bank of this friendly river, which thence watched his labors for many years as once it watched and shared his boyish journeyings. Here children came to him and a full portion of trial and trouble and sorrow. But he never raised a child gentler at heart than himself, and, like all truly good men, he never lost his own heart of youth. Poor he remained to the end, like the Gentlest and Greatest One ever born on this earth, whom he humbly served as his Master and Saviour. But, though I have sat at rich men's feasts, I would rather have had a smile and a crust from him than the hospitality of kings. And I like to recall that he became the head of his poor table like a Prince at his board. Toward the last he bent sorely under the harsh burden of life; but his old friend, the river, never mistook the young John of past years.

Only the other day I stood by his coffin, touched his hand that had done so much kindness, and looked upon his calm face. And it seemed that, standing there, I was given grace to read anew, as never before, the old, old Lesson of Death. For it suddenly came to me that this humble man, whom I have not even named, needed no pity from me or any other, but was enviable alike in his life and in

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his death; being in truth one of that unknown, unhonored host of laborers and sufferers, the true and very salt of the earth, by whom humanity is eternally redeemed, and in whose toil and tears Christ is justified. . . .

Raising my eyes to the open window, I saw the river a little distance beyond, flowing waveless and serene, a path of glory under the setting sun.

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XII

THE POET AS HOST

WHAT is so charming as the hospitality of poets, and so rare, in the best sense? Among the blessings of a life none too pleasantly cast or richly favored, I rate this very high indeed. To break bread with and enjoy the conversation of a man of genius, and at his proper expense (I say it *sans* malice—the Poet and the Price are not always in fortunate conjunction)—is surely an enviable privilege. And if the poet can take a little wine, say a mild Chablis or Pontet Canet, without being moved to recite *too* many of his *best* pieces, why, I am not the man to urge puritanical objection. To be candid, I should not fancy the company of a *cold sober* poet. In truth a dry or water-drinking poet, besides being a contradiction in terms (you know Horace's opinion of the genus), is very ill at such amenities, and he becomes intolerable when, literally in cold blood, he, at his own invitation, insists upon reading copiously from his own Works. This is ten-fold worse when he offers you nothing to drink yourself—I have had one or

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two such experiences and they have made me more wary in selecting my poet. It is quite the nearest thing to Purgatory that I have had a taste of.

There is, to be sure, a prevalent notion that poets are pretty dull fellows, outside their books, and generally fit only for the admiration of polite seminaries of the prunes and prism order. It is held that only now and then a *rara avis* appears like Dick Sheridan, whose talk made men tear up the I. O. U.'s he had given them. Or Tom Moore, of whom Byron said that he was the only poet known to him whose conversation equaled his writings. Or Oscar Wilde, whose brilliancy as a talker was so phenomenal that he was actually blamed for giving his genius to his conversation and only his *talent* to his literary work.

Against this I must beg leave to set my own experience. I have never known a true poet,—a true one, mind you,—who disappointed me in this respect: for a true poet may be eloquent in saying little or nothing, or merely in the fashion of taking his drink. He might not make any pretence to be a talker (like the sententious and reticent yet *power-breathing* B——— C———), nor attempt flight or epigram in a long evening; yet you would not therefore mistake your man, and you would not the less feel yourself in the company of mind. This is a different thing to the silence of stupidity.

After all, only a very simple or sophisticated person would expect a poet to talk literally as he writes,

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and few societies would endure him. Even poets themselves would not put up with such a nuisance. Fancy what Lamb would have said to such coxcombry—he that barely suffered the sublime meanderings of Coleridge. "Come, damn it, Tom," said the profane Byron to the author of "Lalla Rookh," —"pass the Rhenish, and *don't talk poetry!*" . . .

Pardon the slight excursus. I am to speak of the hospitality of poets rather than of their conversation.

Comes before me the dark yet delicate visage of Ameen, the poet of Syria, well and kindly known to the faithful readers of *Papyrus*. Even as I trace these lines he is passing the Pillars of Hercules, homeward bound to his beloved and lovely Lebanon. Hail, Ameen!—Don't you see him standing at the rail, wearing a caftan, smiling gravely and waving composedly at me? . . . Ship that bearest Virgil to the Grecian shore, see that thou bring safe back to me him who is the half of my soul—*animæ dimidium meæ!*—

Allah forgive me this wandering screed. Well, to resume. During a year that Ameen sojourned with us in Gotham (arranging for the publication of his great work which is to bring into poetic synthesis the East and West—I am not so sure what that means, but all is clear with God)—it chanced to me now and then, in the way of our friendship, to offer him a little dinner *à deux*, a theatre or other simple treat.

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On which occasion his cordial compliments, his grave and noble appreciation heightened by his exotic, picturesque demeanor, which might have become a Prince in some Eastern tale, quite abashed me. Often he would cry—"Oh, my friend Mikhael!"—he always so pronounced my name, which troubled the waiters to identify me also as a Syrian of the hill tribes—"if you would come out to my Syria I would show you such hospitality as you could not dream of in this soulless city of millionaires. Promise me that you will come soon."

It was useless to argue with him that one might not catch a steamer for Beyrout as readily as a cable-car for Brooklyn the unblest. In the Oriental mind desire and fulfilment are one; obstacles of any sort, moral or material, do not count in thought as with us. Ameen waved aside with swift, nervous hands all that I could urge against returning with him to Syria and settling myself comfortably on the vine-clad slopes of Lebanon, in the peace of the cedars, with a sherbet and a pair of Black Eyes.

"Money!" he would exclaim. "What shall you want with money? What is it doing for you here in this Gehenna of a New York? Come, my friend, come out to the East where you can live for your soul *all the time,* instead of, as here, only a moment now and then."

In this strain my eloquent friend filled many hours with music and temptation. It looked rather good

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to me at that, especially when we had dined a bit late at Mouquin's and certain harsh practical difficulties seemed to curl up and vanish in the scented smoke of Ameen's Turkish cigarette. The further economic reason that in Syria people present their bills only once a year, with many humble apologies, and never think of sueing them if unpaid, but excuse themselves for having given trouble,—appealed to me with cogent force. But I weakened at the last moment, and Ameen sailed alone with the same fine composure and fatalistic content that he would have shown had I elected to go with him. Inscrutable is the soul of the East!

My brother is gone, he of the burning eyes, the poetic soul, the rich mirth and tender melancholy; but I know that a welcome awaits me in the immemorial land of Syria. And a welcome in Syria, where is the unspoiled heart of the race as only Allah may remember it,—is it not a richer banquet for the soul than a dinner of many courses in Manhattan?

. . .

Then there is Richard of the Quest who looks the poet better than any Englishman since Shelley, and who "hath witched the world," especially the feminine part of it, no less with his verse than with his agreeable personality. Who does not love Richard that has ever really felt the *poet in the man?* And among the women, who has not loved him, one might say, without the least hint of scandal?

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How proud was I when Richard urged me, no great while ago, to come and spend a few days with him on his farm. And not the first time, either. Oh, that Connecticut farm! How I used to envy Richard the possession of it—such an ideal home for a poet! It was not really possession, in a strict legal sense, perhaps (the purchase price was some nine thousand dollars, and Richard had paid a hundred or so thereon in the course of a protracted tenancy)—but what did that matter? Richard always spoke of it with a warmth of feeling and an assurance of ownership beyond legal title-deeds that touched one deeply and gave one a comfortable sense in his acquaintance—it is but human to claim something in the possessions of our friends. I was not so poor when Richard had talked a little about his farm. I was not so much the fearful prisoner of routine when he had made me partaker of his tetherless liberty. . . .

There is something elusive as well as charming in the hospitality of poets. . . . Perhaps that is the real charm of it. I never saw Richard's farm, save with the mind's eye, because, curiously enough, he never was *quite* ready for me when my uncertain liberties coincided with my desire to visit him. But on such occasions he would send me a letter, in the only *gifted* handwriting I have ever seen, a real effect of genius,—so cordial and kindly in regret,

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that my disappointment would be changed into a positive pleasure. Finally, when all the unities on both sides seemed to conspire for our meeting, word came that Richard had unluckily lost the farm—I mean the ownership thereof; through some perverse legal technicality, a mortgage or foreclosure or something like that—as if poets should have anything to do with such monsters! And so it must now take its place with those Things that Never Were, dream-treasure of which at least no picking lawyer shall ever despoil us. I who never saw Richard's farm shall think of it henceforth with something of the glory and pathos of Carcassonne.

I have not been to Richard's farm:
Ah, 'tis a thought too keen with woe,
Now that the smiling days are past
When yet I might but did not go;—
Nor why I lingered may I know,
Since all the prospect could but charm;
But, summer sun or winter snow,
I have not been to Richard's farm.

For oft he pressed me, gracious, bland,
To come and taste his Sabine fare,
All in a coign of Yankee-land!
'Mid sylvan peace and purest air.
There all his *hæc in votis* were,
A sight the Heavens to disarm:

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'Alack the thought that brings despair—
I have not been to Richard's farm.

Yet strange how oft, with full intent,
I aimed to be kind Richard's guest,
And once, I mind me, *almost* went,
Yea, gaily fared in pilgrim vest
To take a train that, swift addressed,
Should speed me thither, *sans* alarm.
I met a man!—God knows the rest:
I did not get to Richard's farm.

"But many other farms there be
(So runs the gossip's soothing tale),
"With smiling field and sunny lea,
"And harvests lush that never fail,
"And happy flights of grouse and quail—"
I say me not the gossip harm,
(Quoth he) yet shall I cease my wail?—
I have not been to Richard's farm.

Now woe is me, the chance is gone,
(He saith) a chance ne'er to return:
I feel mine age slow creeping on,
And journeys that my youth would spurn
Now daunt me sore—yea, this to learn
It fills my breast with sorrow's barm,
The while the tears my cheeks do burn—
I have not been to Richard's farm.

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Too late! too late!—where once the bard
With hyacinthine ringlets sate,
A man of dollars, loud and hard,
Now giveth rule and holdeth state.
Is this a thing to make elate
A breast that feels the Muse's charm?
Blow, winds of Heaven, and me berate!—
I have not been to Richard's farm.

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XIII

OLD MEN FOR LOVE

Love and Death once ceased their strife
At the Tavern of Man's Life.
Called for wine and threw—alas!—
Each his quiver on the grass.
When the bout was o'er, they found
Mingled arrows strewed the ground.

* * * *

Thus it was they wrought our woe
At the Tavern long ago.
Tell me, do our masters know,
Loosing blindly as they fly,
Old men love while young men die?

KIPLING.

WHETHER the poet has fabled truly or not,—whether it be because young men die, it is very certain that old men love. And they seem to have the preference.

So at least you must conclude from even a casual review of the night-life of New York. At all the swell cafés where the sexes meet for the pleasant

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business of guzzling and gorging, the call is obviously for old or elderly men—and young women. An unsophisticated looker-on would suppose any but the true relationship between all these gray and blonde or brunette heads so snugly *tête-à-tête* under the twinkling lusters, with that before them which stimulates appetite and enjoyment in persons of all ages. The seasoned New Yorker looks on it as a matter of course and seldom ascribes a paternal or avuncular or even a marital relation to the gray-haired gallant.

Papas are not so flatteringly attentive, uncles not so affectionately devoted, husbands not so lover-like and languishing. Oh, no! and persons of ill-assorted ages in legal or family bonds do not have such a good time together.

After money-getting, the favorite occupations of the typical New Yorker are guzzling and womaning. Hence comes it that the café, diminishing in glory from the tawdry gorgeousness of Sherry's or the Astoria down to the furtive low-browed dives of the Bowery and the East Side, plays so important a part in the night-life of the city. Here the streams of incense arise to the twin divinities of Booze and Flesh. Here the Belly-God is worshipped unashamed and according to the full rubric. Here the riotous appetites are whipped to their utmost pitch and aphrodisiacs are found for waning or impotent sensuality. Said not Ferrero that Tiberius would be

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shocked in his simple vices by the luxury and licentiousness of New York? . . .

Oh, for a Hogarth's pencil to depict a typical New York crowd under the sway of the all-conquering Venus! Here are the lovely, smiling Lesbians, priestesses of pleasure, from whose embraces with men result the lurid tragedies and feculent romances of the Yellow Press; and here sometimes are to be seen virtuous wives madly emulous of their forbidden charms. Here are the young and the middle-aged of both sexes, with many a hoary Silenus, paying homage to that Image of Pleasure which has seduced the race from the beginning. *O Venus, regina Cnidi Paphique!* O great Bacchus! O most potent Priapus! not fallen is your ancient worship, though the vine-clad altars and the phallic emblems were long since taken away. Here are you adored as wildly as ever in the past by votaries who have never heard your charming Greek names. . . .

Then, you say, these old men and young women are all——? Pshaw, let's not bother what they are, except that they are—having a good time! This is New York, where people mind their own business, or would better. See!

Certainly these highly fed, well groomed oldsters seem to know the game, and if you watch them a while you will wonder less at the strange preference of their fair companions. Do not old men beat young men at most games of patience and stratagem

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and cunning? And is not love preëminently such a game? Tut, tut! these fair young things know quite well what they are about. They are not so uncalculating as they look, not by a good half. In truth there is a shrewd purpose behind their own play. The old lover is gentle and kind and indulgent; above all, generous. There may be a trifle too much gold in his teeth and too little hair on his head. That falsetto crack in his laugh, too, jars on one, like certain effects of light on his profile or the turkey-gobbler movement in his stringy neck. But he has the prestige and the experience of a hundred conquests; and he never hurries you with the rough impetuosity of youth; and he's really splendid company, though his talk *is* a little boresome; and though an old fool, of course, he's not nearly so exacting as a young fool would be—and, in short, he is IT (Newyorkese for *comme il faut*).

You remark that the young women seem proud of their elderly cavaliers and carry themselves with a more pronounced air of assurance than if they were companioned by younger men. Yes, they seem palpably more sure of themselves—of their charm and their power. Is this perhaps the true underlying reason of their preference for lovers or "friends" who might be their fathers?—even grandfathers are not out of the reckoning. Woman's vanity may well be at the bottom of this as of other

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anomalies. Age is (of course) a potent inspirer of confidence.

So much for the psychology of those who go down to fish and be fished for in cafés, where the Belly-God and other divinities of the flesh are frankly worshipped. But *their* affair is not a complex matter—the problem really sounds profounder depths of human nature than are to be studied in this gay world of light and sensuality and pleasure. It is one that radically marks the difference between the sexes. Since the morning of time young women have freely given themselves to old men; young men have rarely given themselves to old women. We revolt at the fact, as we revolt at that other fact, equally shocking and indisputable, that modesty is much less native to women than we pretend to believe by a useful social convention. Still both facts remain to set us hunting occasionally for reasons that shall satisfy inquiring or unsophisticated youth.

Fogazzaro, the Italian novelist, in his book, "The Saint," seeks to make out that certain old men exert a mystical attraction upon young women, and there are surely instances a-plenty in both sacred and profane history to support his theory. However, the mystical attraction with which the world is generally familiar in such cases usually takes the form of what is vulgarly called cash. Lacking that, the old man has the hardest kind of a game to play, and the instances in which he wins out are too few

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to be counted. But he commonly has the money, by virtue of his age and wisdom; and ever since that gay old trifler Jupiter appeared to a pleasing young woman in a shower of gold, this form of temptation has proven irresistible to the sex. So long, then, as beauty deigns to dollars this apparent perversion of nature will continue and the Poet's mournful refrain will hold true—

"Old men love while young men die!"

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XIV

BABYLON

In Babylon, in Babylon,
The tides of love and laughter run
Increasing aye from sun to sun;
And never looks the moon upon
A night that has nor feast nor fun
In Babylon.

In Babylon, in Babylon
Astarte leaves no web unspun,
Nor may the coldest-hearted shun
The rites that leave the maid undone.
Of virgins stale there's ne'er a one
In Babylon.

In Babylon they give the kiss
(A fashion of Semiramis)
By touching tongue to tongue—a bliss
You never dreamed, the like o' this!
And other sweets lack not, I wis,
In Babylon.

'Assyrian Ballads.

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WELL, it must have been a gay old town, that same Babylon, and I have always sympathized with the modest wish of Heinrich Heine, who avowed that he would have liked to run over there some fine day and see the doings. Though one of the Chosen People himself, Heinrich here spoke without prejudice. The Jews, as you are doubtless aware, have no special cause to regret Babylon, since they were long captives there and made no moneys to speak of. But it is known that many of them yielded to the pleasure-loving atmosphere of the place, forgot their stern Jehovah—who had perhaps too much Ego in his cosmos for daily consumption—and, as their prophets were wont chastely to express it, "went whoring after strange gods," not to mention the demure little women of Babylon. By this no doubt was meant the pursuit of those diversions of the flesh to which the people of the City of Baal were notoriously given.

The prophet Jeremiah (who had marked leanings toward Comstockery) was especially severe upon Babylon and spared not of his wrath toward such Jews as allowed themselves to be seduced by her soft pleasures. He wrote somewhat copiously on the subject, being charged to deliver the mind of Jehovah as well as his own. However, they went on having a good time in Babylon, with masked balls, tango dances, *petits soupers,* bridge parties,

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etc., every night. Then the heart of the prophet Jeremiah grew very bitter within him and he prepared a terrible revenge against the Wicked City, to wit: he carefully revised his Book against Babylon, added a few choice anathemas thereto, and, giving it to his servant Seraiah, instructed him to betake himself unto the City and there cast it into the waters of the Euphrates. Which Seraiah did with all diligence and faith. Strange to relate, nothing particular happened thereafter—and at Babylon they went on tangoing, feasting, loving, playing bridge (or the Assyrian equivalent) and, as always, having a good time.

But here's a marvelous thing: Jeremiah's amusing works were not lost to posterity, though cast as aforesaid into the Euphrates,—because the holy man had taken the precaution of keeping one copy of the Revised Edition! If it hadn't been for that, Heinrich Heine would perhaps never have expressed the wish referred to above nor I myself penned these inconsequential remarks.

But I certainly should have liked (with Heine) to run over to Babylon some fine morning and see the sights and the goings on, perhaps take one end of a harmless flirtation or so—why not?—are we not human as they were in Babylon, and have the Jeremiahs ever succeeded in changing human nature? I say, I should have gone, and quickly, too! The language and the manners would be different,

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of course, and the build of the churches, the make of the cabs (whether *décolletée* or otherwise), the uniform of the police and the "daily hint from Paris" of the *flaneuses de pave*. But I reckon the Babylonians would be enjoying themselves, say three thousand years ago, much as we are doing to-day and in pursuit of the same objects. Woman, for example, is the principal factor of pleasure with us as she was in the City of Semiramis. In strict candor, we must admit that she has nowise depreciated since the days of Jeremiah.

There was, secondly, the juice of the grape, lacking which love cannot be enjoyed in its fulness nor folly in its most agreeable phases. Having named Woman and Wine, the everlasting two, it is quite needless to conjecture as to the commonplace amusements—there are really only a few games, and they have been the same among all peoples in all ages. Besides, the prophet Jeremiah, in his miraculously preserved Works, lays marked stress upon the brace of items above mentioned, viz.:—Wine and Woman. Could I have a better authority? . . .

I fancy the Babylonians got more out of their good times than we in New York, which is often called after the great City of Baal, though with a simile the most disparate and ironic. For one thing, the Jews were not exclusively in charge of the public amusements of the Babylonians, manning the box office, the cashier's desk, the little window at the

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maison de joie, and the books at the race-courses. Neither were the latest imported *artistes* from Paris—pardon! I should say Tyre or Sidon—so frequently of the hieratic race. The Chosen People, as we read in their holy records, never got a fair chance in Babylon, after having been taken there against their will, owing to the unreasonable prejudices of Nebuchadnezzar the graminivorous, and other royal Assyrians, of names no less difficult. The most astonishing miracles in favor of the Jews failed to impress those pigheaded Assyrian monarchs, and so for a long time the chosen of God remained mostly hewers of wood and drawers of water—occupations which they have ever since loathed and which are indeed unsuited to their financial and trading ability. Here and there an exceptional genius might surreptitiously do a little in the Three-Ball way, but the Babylonian bilks were apt to swoop down upon him at any moment, and then away with him to the brickyards!

It was too bad, and Jeremiah was right to damn the Babylonians as he did and to cast his Book against them into the guilty waters of the Euphrates. Still, I should have liked to see Assyrian art under such circumstances—it must have been so different! Thespian art especially,—the Art of the Theatre, as Mr. Gordon Craig calls it,—without a Jew in a fur collar to exploit the same, backed up by his confrères in the press, would be a lot more interesting

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than a cuneiform legend. I wonder how they managed the Sidon Show Girls and the Tyrian Tantalizers before the days of Shadrach, Shekel & Co. (lim.). And

> O Babylon, didst thou not know
> A single impresario

of the Oscar Hammerstein species?—(Wegglike, one involuntarily drops into poetry at the mere thought of him). Was there not one Hebrew "barker" within thy gates? Well mightst thou laugh to scorn the curses of Jeremiah! . . .

It seems probable that the Babylonians were not given to anything like so much of the Noise we euphemistically term music, at their public and private entertainments. The thought calls up a yearning regret for Babylon, in spite of the harsh opinions of Jeremiah. In this particular, who shall question their good taste? The spectacle of people trying to eat and converse while suffering the impact of a strident phonograph, an athletic orchestra, a leather-lunged tenor, a screeching soprano or a colored quartet,—was doubtless undreamed of in Babylon, and had such aids to enjoyment flourished there, they would perhaps have made unnecessary some of the curses of Jeremiah. So, too, it may be granted that the Babylonian idea of a good time never comprehended those alleged cafés-chantants

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(Parisian-Hebrew) where people vulgarly eat and drink the while vulgarity "entertains" them from the stage. Nor Babylon, nor Tyre, nor Sidon ever saw anything so atrocious, we can promise ourselves, as these and similar offences in the name of amusement which the remote descendants of Jeremiah and his kind are providing for us to-day in the modern Gotham at prices that would have given the pip to Belshazzar himself; moreover, with strong-armed bandits behind every chair to rob the guests of their few remaining pieces. O ya, ya! was there ever seen such a country for the mazuma! . . .

Best of all, there were no Yellow Newspapers in Babylon—had they been, do you think Shadrach, Shekel & Co. would not have somehow got into the Show Business, *hein?* What a foolishness to think it! . . .

Do you blame me, then, if I agree with Heine in his preference for Babylon?—and so conclude with a verse from the old Assyrian poet above quoted—though, needless to say, I am no sharer in his anti-Semitic prejudices:—

In Babylon there's ne'er a Jew
But has his honest stint to do
(Which means he *does not me or you!*)
Should he his tale of bricks eschew,
Faith, soon he'd learn a trick or two
In Babylon!

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XV

THE NEW BOUILLABAISSE

(With apologies to W. M. T.)

A PLACE I know in old Manhattan,
On Avenue Sixth, to Broadway near,
Where I and cronies mine have sat in
Full oft to Mouquin's famous cheer.
Mine host is French, likewise the menu,
The service spiced with Gallic grace,
But not a dish will there detain you
Like that they call the Bouillabaisse.

What is it? Well, a sort of chowder,
Or you might say a fish ragout,
With all things succulent allowed or
The pick of such as make a stew:
"Green herbs, red peppers, saffron, mussel,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach and dace"—
Why need I with the medley tussle,
Since *he* has sung the Bouillabaisse?

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God bless the French!—and give them credit
For cheering this dull life below:
Blood of the grape!—still let me shed it
In Burgundy or old Bordeaux.
And shall I not cry *Vive la cuisine!*
That boon of man's brief mortal space,
And, while I may, make shift to squeeze in
And take my fill of Bouillabaisse?

Egad, 'tis full ten years and longer
Since first I stopped at Mouquin's door
With him, the braver and the stronger,
Whom I shall haste to meet no more.
Ah, Friend! how often here while sitting,
Of your untimely ended race
I think, with memories round me flitting
Of that first bowl of Bouillabaisse!

A truce to thought!—*"Allons! mon garçon,*
La carte des vins"—*"Monsieur, vent-il*
Du rouge ou blanc?" And, like a parson,
Pious I con the well-known bill.
"Well, this Laffitte of ten years dated"—
"Oui, Monsieur, c'est du tres fin."—So:
Unlike myself, 'tis not belated,
And time but makes it richer glow.

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A bumper for old Melancholy!
We'll drown him fathoms deep to-night,
And in his stead crown laughing Folly,
With lilting airs and glances bright;—
Her cheeks as red, her smile as winning,
And still the same gay mocking grace
We knew of yore nor thought it sinning,
With Beauty o'er the Bouillabaisse.

Ah! where is she, of love no scorner,
To whom my heart was slave of yore?
Here would we dine in this same corner.
And here would I my passion pour.
Dear girl! 'twere vain my grief to smother,
When I recall her darling face:
She jilted me and chose another!—
But we have shared the Bouillabaisse.

And where's her first or last successor?
God bless the dears!—I love them all,
And still would be *Pater Confessor,*
Should better luck no more befall.
The game goes on, though I'm not playing;
In many a couple here I trace
The lure that set my heart a-swaying,
With Love across the Bouillabaisse.

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But Love takes wing and Friendship tarries,
And Wisdom, passing forty-year,
His peace unto his comfort marries,
And coddles his digestion dear.
Still comes he, though a trifle fusty,
A stickler for his ancient place,
And sips his wine still rich and crusty,
And gobbles o'er his Bouillabaisse.

But where is each old camarado
Met here so oft and ne'er in vain?
Where Sadakichi's queer bravado,
And Benj, the learned Jew of Spain?
Where's Paleologue, that Grecian swagger,
And Flanagan o' the fighting race?
Where's Dick the poet?—James no lagger
At art or drink or Bouillabaisse?

Can they be gone?—Why, here together
Drinking we staid but yester-night,
Or was 't last year?—I know not whether
If these poor wits of mine go right.
But sure we sat here, blithe and merry,
While jest and gibe did fly apace.—
I start and wake—it was the Sherry
I took before my Bouillabaisse!

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"Pardon, Monsieur!"—the waiter, smiling,
Speaks as he held the magic clew
Of the dark web my breast beguiling—
"Tous vos amis s'informent de vous."

* * *

Thank fate! the ugly dream is over—
May we for many a year of grace
Still meet around the cheerful cover,
To share the wit and Bouillabaisse.

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XVI

HIS BED

THEY offered me his apartment because I was under suspicion of being somewhat literary myself, and they reckoned upon baiting me with a famous name. He had died only a short time before and the rooms had not been occupied since he was taken to the hospital. He had lived here several years, in fact, during the greater part of his brief literary career, and here he had done the work which gave him his reputation.

While the caretaker, an agreeable and well-spoken man, was talking, I looked about curiously and with not a little awe, seized by that emotion which rooms or habitations associated with personality and achievement always awaken in us. Not much to look at: parlor, bedroom and a tiny bath, but comfortable enough for a single man. As to that, the caretaker said the apartments rented readily enough for light housekeeping. It could hardly be lighter, I thought.

I was tempted, but hesitated on reflecting that he had left these rooms to die. Who of us does not

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give heed to such superstitious promptings? Besides, the sleeping room was too dark (the usual condition of these bandboxes), while the living room fronted on a traffic-ridden street and was too noisy for me.

"*He* did not mind the noise," said the caretaker, "because, you see, he slept in the daytime, in this back bedroom, and worked at night. It suited him all right, and he was here seven years. A fine man he was, sir, and a good patron of the house. I suppose you have read some of his books?—Lord!—what a lot of writing he used to turn out in this room. Many's a time I've seen the floor littered with sheets of paper. And he seemed to have no trouble selling his work. I've seen some of the biggest publishers waiting for him down in the hall, and he in no hurry to have them shown up. He had no use for them, except when he wanted money, and never have I known a man so free and careless with it."

"He didn't care much for company, anyway, did he?" I said, willing to indulge the man's evident desire to gossip.

"No, sir, he kept pretty much to himself, and seldom went out when he had a story on the stocks. Oh, there were times when we wouldn't see him for days and nights, when he was hunting material, on the track of the Thousand-Dollar short story, as he used to say; but, as a rule, he was a home-keeping man. I guess he knew his New York like a book

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and didn't have to potter around to get what he wanted. A sociable man, too, sir, in his own way; liked to chat with us in the house whenever we came up to look after him. And not very strong for the women, sir—indeed, no, though of course he was human like the rest of us."

The caretaker coughed slightly, as who should say that he could tell more if he would; but I did not wish to follow up this lead and, instead, turned to another point on which I had long craved information.

"Is it true," I asked,—"I have only the friendliest interest in the man and not the least disposition to scandalize his memory—but is it true that he drank very much? I ask because it is difficult to see how a heavy drinker could produce so much work and, in the main, of such excellent quality. The newspapers have printed some frightful stuff about him. How much actual truth was in it?"

"Well, sir, he drank pretty hard in the last years —I suppose there's no use denying it."

"You mean in a sociable way—in company, with his friends?"

"Oh, no, sir; that wouldn't have harmed him near so much. He drank alone, in this room, and, as he often told me, to nerve him up to his work. I don't believe he drank for love of the drink. I've heard him say that if there was any stimulant besides alcohol that would keep him up to his work, he would never take another drink of whiskey. But there

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isn't, is there, sir?—and toward the last he took his two quarts a day. And you'd hardly see the sign of it on him. Oh, it got him all right finally—the doctor warned him often enough. But, as I've heard him say, it didn't matter whether he went a bit sooner or later, and while he had to work, the 'drink' was necessary to him. He was totally without fear, sir—you've heard how he asked the doctor to turn on the light when he was near the end, saying, 'I don't want to go home in the dark!' "

There was an unaffected quiver in the caretaker's voice, and I understood why *he* had liked to chat with him.

After a pause the man said: "But if you don't like these rooms, I can show you a nice rear apartment very much more quiet and with better light. You notice the bed here—*his bed* is very good, and I'd advise you to take it."

To this I acceded too readily and presently I was installed with my belongings and *his* bed in the "nice rear apartment." During the daylight hours I often looked at the bed, thinking of the busy restless head that had lain there—that had dreamed there some of the last dreams it was to have in this world. . . .

When bedtime came my mind was still running on him, in spite of myself, and I lay a long while thinking of his brief yet so brilliant career; of the chapter of prison shame in the past which he had so gallantly redeemed; of the variety and vigor of his

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inventions and the astonishing rate at which he had poured them forth; lastly, of that fatal necessity of excitement, the curse of such fiery, imaginative minds as his, and that prostration of will which had conspired to drive him into an early grave and add another to the memorable examples of fallen talent.

My sleep was a chaos of dreams wherein I wandered with cowboys, tenderfeet, rustlers, bad men and all manner of wild-western types, among whom there were strangely mingled characters as wild but less familiar from the Central American countries. I seemed to know them all somehow, and I went around among them calling them by their names, a familiarity which nobody resented. Then I woke, and, after tossing another while, went off into a new dream-series that was even more wildly confused, but wherein the people I met were all typical of Manhattan, Harlem and the Bronx. Panhandlers, gamblers, cheap sports, night birds of every feather, second-story men, bad actors, show girls, serio-comics, the population of vaudeville, "East Side, West Side and all around the town"—all went marching through my brain to a lilting ragtime measure that was still playing when the alarm clock went off at my ear.

And the first thought to say good morning to me was, that even without the caretaker's gossip, I should have known that I had slept in O. Henry's bed.

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XVII

SEX IN THE PLAYHOUSE

THE American drama,—nay, the American theatre,—has now but one word—SEX!

The play's no longer the thing, but the sex in the play. Whether the piece be "tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral," (to quote *Polonius*), or, more likely, something that is no more like any of these than *Hamlet's* cloud, it must have, above all things else, and commonly to the exclusion of all things else, the tang and rankness of sex.

Hence, we have a popular drama, or, not to degrade the word, stage-entertainment, that reeks with rice powder, of which the "stars" are all women and their chief merit an emphasized sexuality. Public interest in these women is diligently stimulated by the newspapers of large circulation, which act as "cappers" for the theatres in consideration of paid advertising. Their love affairs, their divorces, how they keep down pus and swing the saucy croup that lures the Johnnys, old and young,—with suchlike

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pleasing details of their toilets and their persons, are constantly thrust upon us with a persistency that savors of Baxter Street, and in the fulsomely familiar style of the yellow journalist. Simple people who wonder at the quantity of space given up to "featuring" these sawdust dolls of the stage, do not think of the shrewd business calculation back of it.

I have heretofore pointed out the close analogy that exists between Yellow Journalism and Yellow Theatricalism. They are both marked by certain qualities which one word connotes and describes. It is therefore not surprising to find them in a business partnership.

As the five-franc piece was said to be the hero of every one of Balzac's novels, so the dollar is the motive of the Sexual Drama—the motive, I would say, of its production and exploitation. This condition of things we owe to a type of manager who now controls our theatre to a marked extent, and is paymaster of our drama.

I do not say that the Jew discovered sex, but he certainly hit upon its commercial value in connection with the drama. Something of this, of course, was known before; it remained for the Jew, with his infallible instinct for the weakness of human nature, —an Eastern gift, by the way,—to develop it to the full; in short, to get the business out of it. That he has done this no competent observer will deny. In most of the theatres controlled by him, vaudeville or

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what-not, we get little but sexualized entertainment that makes its covert or frank appeal to the baser instincts. Like his fellow, the Yellow Journalist, the Jew theatre-manager knows that everybody has these, and with an admirable economy of effort, he makes his play accordingly. His genius for business and management enables him to spread the contagion far and wide. I pass over the legends explanatory of the elevation of certain beefy and brainless bayadères as "stars," who haven't abilities above dish-washing—it is surely adding insult to injury if the Jew makes us pay for his mistresses! But the earnest student of the drama may well be puzzled that a country like ours, which is notably poor in all that concerns true art, should have some dozens of women exploited as great actresses and heading their own companies, while in France, where the art of the theatre is carried to the highest excellence, we hear mention of only two or three famous names.

The explanation probably is that art makes the actress in France, while the Jew makes her in our favored country. I speak calmly and without prejudice, for I am not a Jew-hater, and am indeed proud to count among that race some of my warmest friends. But it is not my cue to flatter either Jew or Gentile, and I am bound to say that the present degradation of the stage in this country bears a stigma and a character offensively Semitic.

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The prevalent "Salome" business offers a striking example of the kind of "art" and the kind of managerial methods that disgrace the popular playhouse. Not a variety show on the "circuit" but has its Salome Dance, whose only attraction lies in the nudity of the performer, and the indecency of the exhibit. The rage of these utterly artless Phrynes for uncovering all that Nature gave them infects the audience with a sort of satyriasis. The newspapers, as I have said, lend a lavish aid with text and picture. Of one such performance I read: "An inch to the right or an inch to the left, the shifting of a shadow of one of the responsible jewels, and revelations must ensue which a world of blushes would not suffice to cover."

This is Orientalism of the grossest kind, but it fetches the money, and, indeed, the Jew has found nothing so profitable since the huchi-kuchi. That he knows his business, is evident from the success of the rampant, riotous Salome craze, and that his business is to inoculate the American public with the virus of Eastern sensualism, is equally clear. . . .

Not long ago I dropped into one of the finest theatres in New York at an evening performance. The costliness and beauty and grandeur of this playhouse were such as Shakespeare never imagined. I thought of the bareness of the "wooden O," which must needs suffice the most potent genius that has ever ruled the stage. Of the ill-smelling mechanic

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rabble in the pit, where juniper had to be burned to the end of overcoming their sweet natural odors. Of the stage with its poor daubs of scenery and primitive make-believe contrivances,—where, too, hectoring fine gentlemen of the day made place for themselves, sadly incommoding the actors. Yes, I thought of the smoky, ill-lighted, foul-smelling Globe or Blackfriars wherein were first enacted the grandest tragedies, the finest comedies ever written, and then I surveyed the beauty and brightness, the luxury and taste by which I was surrounded in this modern New York theatre. Three superb galleries. Tier upon tier of splendidly furnished boxes. The lower part of the house, rising from the orchestra by a gentle incline, set the general note of comfort, convenience and elegance. Prevailing color, Pompeian red, with chandeliers and clusters of the richest and most beautiful designs. Over all a perfect light that never offended the eye and that came and went marvelously, as the exigencies of the performance required. Wonderful scenic effects and illusions that would have made old Prospero burn his books in despair. And an audience which in numbers, in prosperity, in manners and seeming intelligence might have honored the noblest traditions of the theatre.

I turned to the magnificent stage, the like of which Shakespeare never saw or even dreamed. Thereon a large young woman was exhibiting her flesh—most

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of it—and singing a vaudeville song in the colorless, unlovely voice that seems to belong to all "artists" of this type. Between verses she kicked and danced with as much suggestion as she could command—of art or true grace there was nothing at all. She varied her act a little by reciting a few "gags," more or less flippant and smutty, in that exasperating phonograph voice of the female vaudevillian. Her performance was, in her own dialect, "rotten," but she seemed, nevertheless, to have made a hit and was recalled several times. . . .

I have said that I am no Jew-hater. Therefore I may be allowed to say, without prejudice, that the Jew must be called off from his present work of degrading the stage. Kipling warns us that "East is East and West is West, but never the twain shall meet." To the Jew of the species under analysis, sex is everything—except the money. He cannot conceive of pleasure or entertainment without it; that is, of course, his Asiatic inheritance. But he is not the only, although the most conspicuous, offender; and, indeed, more and more are found apt to learn the lesson.

Finally I wish it to be understood that my censure is expressly aimed at and limited to the type of Jew who is commercializing the popular playhouse at a terrible cost to public morals and to the fatal prejudice of a genial art. I know, as well as anyone who may think to remind me, how much that art owes to

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Semitic genius both on its mimetic and creative sides. My writings in the past should vindicate me from the charge or suspicion of Jew-hatred, and I shall surely have done the race a service if any word of mine should aid in calling off the evil type of Jew who is bringing reproach upon the name.

* * * * *

The racial nerve is highly sensitive, and to an excessive degree, perhaps, among people who have been subjected to abuse and persecution because of their race. Therefore, it is not surprising, in spite of my previous good character, that a few honest Hebrew friends of mine should have taken in very ill part the preceding article on "Sex in the Playhouse." They were angry because I had touched a sore and sensitive nerve, and they did not stop to consider whether I was justified at all in touching it. I still believe that I was, and their letters, written to me in anger, have not persuaded me to the contrary.

In making my criticism upon a type of Jew who is, I believe, largely responsible for the degradation of the popular stage entertainment,—for its vulgarity, its almost complete lack of intellectual quality, above all, for its crass indecency or sexualism,—I took pains to point out that I spoke as a friend of the Jew. This is bitterly contravened by some of

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my Hebrew critics. A worthy Rabbi in New York writes me:

"You cannot help being a Jew-hater—it is in the blood, or rather in the water with which you were baptized."

I respect a good man even when anger moves him to be unjust. The Rabbi is wrong—I do not hate, I love my brother the Jew. But, if the Rabbi please, I shall choose my Jewish brother, and it will not be the type of Jew whom I have scored as a reproach to the race. I assure the Rabbi that my liberal view of Christianity is such that it could not foster Jew-hatred. Strictly logical Christians should love the Jew (I fear many of them do not), for what is Christianity but another form of Judaism? Can the orthodox Christian take Christ and leave Moses? Can he accept the Gospels and cast away Genesis? Take Calvary and leave Sinai? Nay, my dear Rabbi, if you will pardon the homely phrase in such a connection, these eggs are all in one basket!

Certainly, then, it is not as a Christian that I could, would or should hate the Jew. Indeed, as a prudent man, with Heaven to gain, I should endeavor to stand well with the whole family, the ancient as well as the more modern connection. Also I remember Disraeli's observation, that half the world worships a Jew and the other half a Jewess . . . curiously indisputable, though we seldom think of it in that way.

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Again, the good Rabbi fears that I am myself tainted with the sensuality I impute to the playhouse Jew-manager, because I have gone into details regarding the "Salome" business, both on the stage and in the yellow press. This is a foolish use of the *Tu quoque*. The Rabbi knows that nothing is hidden at a clinic. My task in the article referred to above was similarly painful but salutary. Other friends assure me that I kept well within bounds.

The racial nerve, and not the Rabbi's logical faculty, is at work when he resents fair criticism or censure of *any* type of Jew. On this principle he will find an overwhelming number of Jew-haters among his own race. With such I am well content to be classed,—with Heine in other days and with Zangwill in these. By the way, has my reverend censor read the latter's fine poem entitled "Israel"? I quote a few lines, merely to refresh his memory and awaken his candor.

Hear, O Israel, Jehovah the Lord our God is One,
But we, Jehovah—His people—are dual and so undone.

Slaves in eternal Egypts, baking their strawless bricks,
At ease in successive Zions, prating their politics;

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Priests of the household altar, blessing the bread
and wine,
Lords of the hells of Gomorrah, licensed keepers of
swine;

Pious, fanatical zealots, throttled by Talmud coil,
Impious lechers and sceptics, cynical stalkers of spoil.

Another remonstrant, also a reader of long standing, says with much heat: "Your article, 'Sex in the Playhouse,' was a revelation. Two sentences—contradictory as they are—betray the color of your writings and the character of the man. 'I am not a Jew-hater,' you say: a cowardly retraction when one considers the essence of your article: *The degradation of the stage in this country bears a character offensively Semitic.*"

The racial nerve, you see! A thing may be bad, even damned bad (I am not now talking to a Rabbi), but it must not be "offensively Semitic" (by the way, the term Semitic is not limited to the Hebrew race). The reason wherefore does not appeal to me. Are there no infra-angelic Jews at all? Must we salute every member of the hieratic race with the exalted compliment, *Macula non est in te!* I should not hesitate to write of a thing as "offensively Irish" or "offensively English," or "offensively Gallic," if it were so in either case. Then, if I find a thing offensively Semitic, shall I not say so, on pain

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of being dubbed a Jew-hater? *Parbleu!* This is the worst kind of intolerance, the vice of those who have cried "Persecution!" so long that they keep it up after persecution has ceased, and often to divert attention from things that will not bear the light.

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XVIII

TO A JOURNALIST

I TAKE the liberty of addressing you thus directly (though my personal acquaintance with you is of the slightest) for these several reasons: You are perhaps the foremost exponent of what is sometimes called the New, and more often and with keener descriptive effect, the Yellow Journalism—it is, besides, a title that you glory in, so that in using it you will acquit me of a purpose to fling dirt at the outset. You are said to be the best-paid practitioner of this kind of journalism—to receive a much larger salary than the President of the United States, or of many of the heads of corporations which are the objects of your constant assault. With the majority of such corporations I have no more sympathy than yourself—I merely set down the rumor or fact. But, even if the least extravagant reports touching your salary are well founded, no great literary man of our time has regularly received anything like the rate of your compensation.

It is added that in your case the remuneration is

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only a just equivalent of your services; that you have literally created the success and prosperity of the newspapers with which you have been connected during ten or twelve years. Your career is among the wonders of latter-day journalism, and you are still a young man in vigorous physical health and of unexhausted brain. You are yourself one of the most striking examples of that practical success which you are in the constant habit of holding up to your readers as the due reward of ability, concentration and purpose. Yet even such success as yours must pay a penalty, and it occurs to many who view you with no unfriendly eye that a far less successful writer might easily perform a higher and better service to his generation.

It is also to be accounted in your favor that you come of good blood and brain—and you do not suffer this to be forgotten, being, like most amateur or dilettante socialists, an aristocrat at heart. Your father was a cultivated and generous idealist for whom it may be said that in a time when such professions among men of wealth were far less common than they are to-day, and also far less exposed to suspicion, he took up and advocated the now intellectually popular gospel of socialism. It is true he left no enduring word of his own, but at least he bequeathed a gracious memory of himself in the recollections of greater men. At our only meeting you took occasion to speak of your honored father,

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and did so with a natural pride which I thought became you well. No doubt you have inherited that father's intellect, without a due share of his softness of heart; or perhaps you have rubbed off this latter quality in the savage battles, the man-fighting rivalries of journalism. It may well be, for in the hard lines of your face, in the cold, unsmiling eye, metallic with concentrated self, in the firmly mortised jaw, and in the apparent transcendency of mind over heart, I saw no image of the gentle disciple of Fourier. Nay, the thought came to me that were a single chance of life offered to two shipwrecked men on a raft in mid-ocean, both to fight for it and one of them yourself,—I could easily pick the survivor.

You have been well educated, and, though one of the hardest workers and most productive writers in your profession, you are a rigorous student, absorbing and imparting the results of your reading (for you are an unrivaled popularizer) with equal zest. You have already outlived the New York journalist's brief working generation, and your mind still acts with the spring of an intellectual athlete: you spin your top as well as ever! Of course there is something abnormal about your work, snatched from the brain so often without due ripening; the pace is one you would not naturally set yourself. The mental effort required to produce so much and so constantly, to reap so many reluctant harvests of the brain, is all the greater that your work is essen-

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tially joyless. I do not remember to have ever read an article, or even a paragraph, of yours that made me smile—and I am an easy subject. Evidently the saving grace of kindly humor is not one of your striking gifts; I can but think that you would be the better writer for it! But, you will say, your business is not to make literature, but journalism, and—for you are not ashamed of it—even Yellow Journalism.

The word recalls me. I have set down this little personal preface to prove that I am not wholly ignorant of your qualities and that I can even make a guess, though possibly a wrong one, as to your character. It will perhaps interest you the more in what I have left to say.

You are a pitiless critic of public men with whom your employer or his newspapers are at feud. You have revived and well-nigh outdone the worst traditions of personal journalism—the kind of which Dickens has drawn an immortal copy. You should not, therefore, mind a little plain speaking on my part—I shall not trench upon your license.

You know that the newspaper which employs you, or, at any rate, the kind of journalism which it most conspicuously typifies, is the actual and potential cause of much of the crime which it exploits for its own profit. You know that it is a subtly devised, perfectly organized, efficiently conducted Seminary of Vice. You know—for you are one of its direc-

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tors—that a simple statement of its policy and programme would be: *Work everything with sex in it!* You cannot deny—for your practice would refute you—that herein is your chief bait for circulation. As an excellent journalist, you would probably admit that it is vastly more effective than your own editorials—you would not have your style compared to an application of cantharides!

You know that this vile and insidious appeal is most cunningly calculated for all ages; that, like a well-organized brothel, it has seductions for the innocent, baits for the young, satisfactions for the initiate, and aphrodisiacs for the old. You are perfectly aware that a steady course of your newspapers would demoralize an archangel and confound the moral relations of a tribe of Yahoos. And still you dare brag of your audience of a million readers. God help the city, if you are anywhere near the mark!

You cannot deny—though you would sophistically evade the admission—that the most terribly alluring figure, in the eye of your Yellow Journalism, is the Prostitute, the Phryne of the social heights or depths, by, for or through whom murder and crimes scarcely less dark are committed. To glorify your Lady of Shame, all restrictions of space are set aside and the whole battery of Yellow Journalism is unmasked and brought into play: Your famous novelist who can pervert fact into fiction better than he

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can present fiction as fact. Your celebrated slop-stress by whose banal art two generations of factory girls have tasted the delights of impossible romance. Your weird sisters of sensation kowtowing about the charméd pot of sexuality. Your adepts at mixing and contriving the false sentiment, the lurid exaggerations, with which you bid for the popular penny. Your high-browed reporters, intolerant of the restraints of law, who take it as their function to prejudge every case to suit the passions of the mob or the exigencies of circulation. Your male and female artists in pruriency, primpers of libidinous phrases, whose leering, affected modesty is given the lie by a covert bawdy suggestion, like a satyr's obscene by-play, wherein is the fine consummate art of the Lesbian journalist.

All these are of your house—the forced products of your boasted kind of journalism.

Shall I tell you why the direct appeal of your newspapers is to the base instincts of human nature? Because you know that everybody has these, the noble as well as the ignoble; that a beast crouches in every human being, waiting only an opportunity to leap forth; and you have had good proof, no doubt, that the mob craves the food you give it. But your worst and most damnable offense is in debauching thousands of innocent and ignorant young girls and boys from whom it is impossible to keep the rank

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infection of your paper—as soon as they can spell you make them free of the Seminary of Vice!

Will you dare assert that your newspaper, and others of the same kind and hue, give a worthy reflection of the life of the great city of New York? Think of the whole world of things, inspiring, instructive, useful or ennobling, which you deliberately ignore or suppress in favor of all that degrades, debases and corrupts. Think what a Sodom this city would be if it were literally as your journalism depicts it!—heaven would not have avenging fire enough to consume it. Fancy the utter destruction of the Great City by some Pompeian catastrophe, with only a sample copy of your paper to tell future generations what it was like, what manner of people lived and died in it. Would not men say that it had perished under the just curse of God!—would not they pronounce it the wickedest, the most foolish and trivial, the least given to worthy things of all the great cities that have ever existed?

I ask you why do you give your talents to a journalism which celebrates the prostitute and the plug-ugly, the freak and the criminal, the fool and the degenerate? Why do you make your strongest appeal to the low forehead and the vicious heart? Why do you play the pander, or connive at the foul trade, even for "the largest salary ever paid to writer or journalist"?

It is no answer that you cannot help the conditions

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of your work; that a journalist's business is to give the public what it wants; that your own writing is free from the reproach of the news columns; that, with all its faults, Yellow Journalism does good service to the people in defending their rights, combating and repressing monopolies, trusts, etc., etc.

Few things in this world are wholly good or wholly bad, but the rotten half of your orange spoils the entire fruit. Nor is it true that the public—even the mob, the many-headed beast—would not accept a better, cleaner journalism. *The public has not corrupted you—it is you who have corrupted the public!* You created the taste to which you are now obliged to cater with ever stronger and ranker stimulants. You have wrought the Circean spell of changing the people into swine, and, from a fear of losing your vile profit, you will not undo the enchantment.

As for the merits of your own work, they are sufficiently admitted by your "million readers," and through a fit medium they might really count to some worthy effect. Your editorials often convey good, practical counsels on life and conduct, especially with a view to the Main Chance, and your peculiar brand of Socialism is not without plausibility and appeal. All this, as well as your own continent habits of mind, I freely concede. But you must allow that a narrow rivulet of fairly clean water,—to which I may compare your own writing,—has desperately

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little chance of keeping its purity or whatever gift of health it may seek to convey, when it is engulfed and swallowed up by the wide-rushing sewer of Yellow Journalism.

You are ambitious to be known as a reformer, you sometimes talk the vaguely threatening language of Social Revolution. Let me invite your attention to a reform, a revolution, which need cause no misery or bloodshed, no civic tumult, no disturbance of property rights, no setting of man against man or class against class—a reform that will procure you a truly honorable fame, of infinitely higher value than that of being known as the "best paid journalist in the world." I allude to a reform of the kind of journalism above considered, which more and more impeaches and infects the entire newspaper profession in this country.

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XIX

TRIAL BY NEWSPAPER

SCENE: A courtroom in the City of New York.

To the bar: Two reputed *horizontales* charged with blackmail and attempted murder. They are advantageously placed so that they can make googoo eyes at the Jury. The Jury is composed of twelve average New Yorkers, the intellectual type that one sees in Subway or L trains, buried in the pages of the "Daily" or "Evening Horror." They are frankly interested in the semaphore work of the accused.

There is the usual crowd of sensation-seekers, men of various degrees of loaferdom and women whose looks and dress suggest a strong spiritual kinship with the defendants. All are marked by an air of pleased alert expectation, as at a play. This feeling is obviously shared in by the policemen, court attendants, reporters, hangers on, etc., and is from time to time reflected in the manner of the Judge, a corpulent person of much apparent good humor. It is less noticeable in the Jury, perhaps because some

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of them are unused to their present situation. The lawyers for the defense are obstreperously jocular, while the Public Prosecutor and his assistants seem plunged in gloom.

The Judge: Call The People vs. the Happy Horizontales, who are charged with attempting to separate Col. Priapus Spondulix from his money and his life. Are the defendants in court?

Clerk of the Court: Please your Honor, they are.

The Judge: Let them be arraigned.

. . . The ceremony of arraignment is formally gone through with, the accused meanwhile wearing an unconcerned expression bordering on amusement. They smile and give each other little pats of encouragement—and their eyes return constantly to the Jury.

The Judge: Are the reporters for the several editions of the daily papers all present?

Clerk of the Court: They are all here, please your Honor.

. . . Spectators intent on the press tables, whereat are seated various well-known reporters and specialists in "crimes of passion," whose signed articles contribute greatly to the public enjoyment of criminal trials and usually influence the verdict.

The Judge: I ask particularly because during a recent criminal trial the special representative of the "Morning Scream" complained that some proceed-

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ings were had in his absence, the circulation of his journal being thereby injuriously affected. I need hardly say that, if this Court knows itself, it sets the interests of the Press above every other consideration.

. . . Murmur of applause in the Court.

A pale gentleman with a high forehead and a slightly Hebraic aspect, evidently the representative of the "Scream," rises in his place at the reporters' table and bows low to the crowd. Then, nodding slightly to the Court, he resumes his seat.

The Judge: I want to know if the Sympathy Sisters are present, ready to render unto the accused the tender ministrations which their sex requires, and incidentally to tell all about it in the "Evening Gusher." How barren of interest and devoid of healthy emotion would our criminal proceedings be, lacking the cheerful presence and enlightened commentary of these admirable women! I frankly avow that I am indebted to them for many of my most applauded rulings. I trust the Sisters are here and placed according to their desire.

. . . Admiring attention directed to two alert, youngish-looking, though not strictly young, women seated at the press table. They smile and bow to the Court, without rising; then glance reassuringly at the accused, who smile back at them.

The Judge: The special artists of the several papers will be afforded every facility as usual for

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the pursuit of their worthy art, so necessary to the ends of justice and the moral well-being of the community. As the poet says,

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen."

And so on—I would quote the rest, but my memory is bad. Oh, Mr. Crayon, I'll thank you to be a bit more complimentary in sketching the Court in future. I'm not over-vain, but your last pastel is being framed by my political opponents and has created a bad feeling in the district.

. . . Stir among the newspaper artists and camera squad. Mr. Crayon, a pallid, long-haired gentleman, is identified by his somewhat sheepish expression. His companions jeer at him *sotto voce.*

Clerk of the Court: Please your Honor, everything has been arranged for the artists, and they are all here.

The Judge: Has the matter of seating the defendants' female relations been attended to, so that the Jury may be duly influenced by their presence and emotion?

. . . Attention directed to a group of women seated near the accused, with whom they occupy themselves officiously from time to time.

Clerk of the Court: Please your Honor, we have admitted as many females as we dare, without inconveniencing the Court.

The Judge: The Court will cheerfully waive its

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convenience in deference to the voice of Nature and the sentiment of the public Press. . . .

Subdued murmur of approval in the Court Room.

The Judge: Oh, yes—there was something else—I was quite sure there was something else. Is the Prosecution ready to go on with the case?

The Public Prosecutor: If it please the Court, the cards have been stacked against us—I beg the Court's pardon, I would say that there is the usual plant here in favor of these defendants. Furthermore, I realize that it's a waste of time and money to try to convict a woman of a crime of this sort, unless she's over sixty and cross-eyed or humpbacked. The newspapers simply will not stand for a conviction. However, I am unwilling to be rated as an enemy of the Press, and I shall therefore go on with this case, though, if your Honor please, I can't see how The People are going to have a run for their money.

Counsel for the Defense (*rising excitedly*): I object to the Prosecutor's remarks as reflecting upon the integrity of the defense, and I demand that he withdraw them.

The Public Prosecutor (*ironically*): Withdraw nothing!

The Judge (*with some heat*): I sustain the objection and order the Prosecutor to withdraw his offensive remarks. (*In a milder tone*) Come, now, boys, let's be fair and easy. We're all here in obe-

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dience to the Higher Law of the Newspaper—(*outburst of approval in the court which the Judge represses with raised hand*). As I say, since that's what we're here for, we may as well be decent about it.

The Public Prosecutor: Seeing that your Honor puts the matter in that way, I submit to the will of the Court and withdraw the words that have given offense, while reserving my private opinion.

The Judge: Well, to be sure, that's very handsome of you, Mr. Prosecutor, and I trust the newspapers will not be too hard on you for your private opinion. We are all right now, I think. Let the trial proceed.

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XX

A FEUD

IN the majority of marriages some form of antagonism grows up between husband and wife, and in course of time produces a fixed alienation. Often a very little thing in the beginning, and capable of being soothed away with a caress or forgotten in a smile, it waxes imperceptibly under repeated differences, quarrels, contradictions, coldnesses, reconciliations entered into with a sub-conscious purpose of falling out again;—in a word, all that goes to create and confirm the feud in marriage of which Balzac was the great modern discoverer. No class or station in life is exempt from it, no marriage, however guaranteed by priestly benedictions; no match, however fortunate in the things that commonly make for happiness; no consent of hearts, however absolute; no mutual love, however firm and well founded.

As a tiny grain of sand lodged somewhere in the body, and overlooked by the cleansing agents of Nature, will in course of time fester and threaten the house of life itself, so the small seed of hate is

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hidden deep in hearts that should love, until the years bring it to a tragic fruition.

But marriage is a very fascinating and even necessary relation; I do not imagine that the possibility of feud will ever deter young persons from entering into it. As somebody said a few thousand years ago, this is a game which everyone is bound to play for himself. Youth has to learn, and even Age sometimes must have its lesson. This is perhaps the one enduring and unchanging feature of the human comedy.

I heard lately of a case of unusually interesting matrimonial feud.* Not the least tragic feature of it is that, the husband being dead, the widow, actuated, as she believes, by the very worthiest motives, still wages her end of the quarrel over a truceless grave.

When we dress up Rancor and Wounded Pride in the habiliments of the Christian virtues, Duty and Charity, it is quite wonderful to what issues they lead us. Virtuous women are somewhat prone to playing this little comedy at the instigation of the Devil. Ah! who so unforgiving as a virtuous Christian conventional woman?

This woman certainly believes that the feud is

*This narrative is potentially, not literally, true in certain details, and no aspersion is meant to be conveyed to the prejudice of any living person.—AUTHOR.

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buried with her husband; she would shrink in horror at the idea of perpetuating it by any conscious word or act. Of course, she will say that she was always right, now that he is dead, as she never failed to say it whilst he lived, without ever causing that impassive face of his to drop its fine mask.—Is that what you call carrying on the feud?—hoity, toity! . . .

At the outset they were a fairly well-matched couple, belonging to the class of fortunate Americans. Though she was very rich, his own means were respectable, while his family was even better than hers, and his abilities joined to his noble and engaging personality quite balanced the scale, in the view of the worldly-minded. So there was nothing in the circumstances of this union upon which to predict or postulate a feud.

But men often find their Ideal, their Purpose in life, *after* marriage; women rarely. I mean, of course, a Purpose, an Ideal that quite conflicts with what has gone before. Marriage is thus the beginning for some exceptional men and the end for most women.

This man found his true self only after ten years of marriage and of a comfortable, conventional life. Like Tolstoy, he perceived at length the vanity and selfishness of his life cushioned on every side and defended by all the means and precautions of wealth against the hard realities which have always nur-

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tured the true leaders and prophets of the race. His soul, awakened, aspired to nobler things: beyond all this clinging, lapping, enervating luxury he looked to the stern discipline of the spirit whereby the heights are conquered; the walls of class and caste faded away and he saw the Vision of Humanity; the buzz and small talk of society died as his ear became attuned to the oracles of God.

Like Tolstoy, also, he determined to make a real renunciation of his worldly position; but in this he failed, the chains of convention being too strong for him. These chains, this convention were personified in his wife, who could see nothing but madness in his new ideas and resisted them to the bitter end. She had thoroughly learned that creed of selfishness, always the religion of the rich and sheltered, which attributes to Divine Providence the gifts of wealth and social position. She returned thanks to God in her fashionable church for these material blessings, and she was fully decided not to flout the Giver by yielding up her smallest title in the same.

So here was the feud betwixt these two—not exhibiting itself in violent quarrels and recriminations, because they were exceedingly well-bred persons and had an anxious care of the proprieties, living as they did in the glass house of the rich, surrounded by servants, and with children, too, of whom they were bound to be mindful. A real feud not the less, though politely masked and restrained; a feud that

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deepened and widened with the years, since there can be no true union where different and conflicting ideals are pursued; a feud that is not yet healed, though the grave has closed over one party to it.

For this man really became great in a way abhorrent to his wife and the circle in which he ostensibly belonged. His renunciation was genuine, though he continued, to all appearance, to live the life of the rich; the truth being that he was with them but not of them. He dined frugally as a hermit at his luxurious table. He absented himself from his wife's receptions, so far as he could, and he took little or no part in that round of inane entertainment consecrated to fashion. He hated the wealth-worship which, in default of an aristocratic tradition, supplies a sort of spiritual bond to that limited American class which significantly calls itself SOCIETY. Even more he despised the snobbishness, that bastard, parasitic growth of one or two generations of money, which is poisoning social life in this country. Like Balzac's hero, he shook his fist at that favored, insolent society, and vowed war against it.

Meantime his name was becoming known in a world totally and abysmally different. His writings, which drew a certain strength and pungency from the conditions of his life, were being widely read and circulated. Within ten years from the time of his awakening he saw himself accepted as a leader

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of that wide-scattered but devoted contingent, that Forlorn Hope of humanity, whose mission it is to carry on the hopeless battle of lost causes and to represent the idealism of the down-trodden. His name became a watchword in the camps of insurrection; was uttered with tears and blessings in the secret conclaves of Russian terrorists; by Polish patriots ready to hurl themselves upon certain death for their cause; by Spanish plotters against throne and caste; by those fiery spirits everywhere that seek to drink of the heady wine of revolution. And yet this man counseled no armed attack upon authority and advocated no violence: the simple fact that he rejected the system to which the ruling forces of the world lend their support,—in government, in religion, in the establishment of caste, in the distribution of wealth,—caused him to be taken up and borne on the shield by the so-called "enemies of Society."

In the midst of all this he died very suddenly and was passionately mourned by his admirers and followers in many lands. The class to which he normally belonged in this country paid as little heed to his death as to his life.

Now this man was growing at the time of his death, has gone on growing since, and will continue to grow. Lovers of his memory in far distant places have set themselves to the task of gathering up every written word of his, in order to complete his legacy. They see in him a great soul whose every

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utterance was precious and treasurable; a servant and, in a sense, a martyr of the Ideal. They say his life-work was only just beginning when he died; that it is living and potential in his message which remains.

His always consistent widow is not in sympathy with this view,—oh, quite the contrary! Moreover, these testimonies to the greatness of the man irritate her as confirming his side of the feud. She refuses to give up certain manuscripts which he left, saying that their publication can only do harm. His family, she declares, is anything but flattered by the sort of posthumous attention he is receiving—she had always warned him of it! So she keeps under lock and key,—nay, perhaps has destroyed,—the writings which, it may be, contain the perfect fruit of the man's thought, the quintessence of his spirit, the one thing that he longed most to say and that in some happy moment achieved expression.

She applauds herself for her courage and resolution in resisting the entreaties of his friends, and puts it all to the credit of her own virtue. But it really is the feud . . . and the joy of having the last word!

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(TO EDEN PHILLPOTTS)

BOOK THE THIRD

ADVENTURES IN LETTERS

WHO has not written it over and over again, and then torn it up, and still renewed the effort with prayers and tears,—he knows you not, ye Heavenly Powers!

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BALLADE OF MANY AUTHORS

ALACK for the fate that comes to all
Brain-sicklied wights of the scribbling trade:
Sib are they to Oblivion's pall,
A circle in water, dust and shade.
Was it for this such stress they made
To scale the slippery peaks of fame,
Only to see their visions fade—
Back to the night from whence they came?

Dear God! the struggle through barren years,
The hope deferred and the waiting long,
And, for a guerdon of all their tears,
A briefer date than an idle song.
For not to these do the heights belong,
Where the thronéd bards made glad acclaim,
But Charon's curse and his bitter thong—
Back to the night from whence they came.

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For this they bartered their earthly peace,
And let the sweetness of life go by;
Nor recked tho they saw the moons decrease,
And the tides of being run scant and dry:—
Yea, even when Death himself drew nigh,
Him would they welcome, nor harshly blame,
Seeing the Portal of Victory—
Back to the night from whence they came!

Tell me, ye dupes of an empty dream,
Is life no more than a pedant's hour,
To spoil of paper a hasty ream,
Then quick to bed with the earthworm dour?
Eheu! mislikes me your sermon sour,
With its bellman's ending, aye the same:
Fain would I take at least a flower
Back to the night from whence I came.

Poor fools, that stew in your own vain sweat,
Nor ever cease to swither and swink,
Pray, what is the recompense you'll get,
When your red blood turns to water and ink?
A bit of immortal fame, you think—
Ære perennius—that's the game?
But lo! you're snuffed out quick as a wink—
Back to the night from whence you came.

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L'ENVOI

Prince, be you wise in your golden prime:
Live you and love while the pulses flame,
Till careless you pass—sans prose, sans rhyme—
Back to the night from whence you came.

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II

PASSION

IN the course of some remarks on Daunon, a French Academician who, though little known to history, yet played a great part in the events of his time,—the time of the French Revolution,—Heine makes the following acute observation:

"Why does not his name flourish as brilliantly in our memories as those of so many of his contemporaries who played a far less important part? What did he want to attain to celebrity? I will say it in one word—it was *passion*. It is only by some manifestation of passion that men ever become celebrated in the world. A single deed, a single word will suffice, but it must bear the most passionate impress."

Heine has here enunciated a truth worthy of his penetrative genius. *Passion* is the word—the divine fury that possesses a man when, like Hamlet, he finds the world out of joint and rages to set it right.

Certainly this is a part allotted to but few men, for God is very careful in the choice of His leading

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actors and prepares their entrances and exits, nay, their very lives, with a care that appears throughout all history. We are not to confound with these agents of destiny mere madmen like the fool who fired the Ephesian dome. But passion, *true passion,* is the mark by which we shall know the potential players in the great human drama. This passion is a consuming fire that spares neither him who bears it in his breast, nor the proper victims of his wrath. All perish—yet shall the world never forget where the flame divine has blazed!

This remark of Heine's has just occurred to me in turning over—what do you think?—a volume of Mr. Howells's literary reminiscences. Few books are more charming if you will but give yourself to that style so exquisitely *intime,* yet without a trace of the egotism which offends. Mr. Howells's literary expression is a real *fons leporis,* a perpetual spring of pleasantness and elegance. In the mere respect of good breeding it shames the present civilization of this country. Mr. Howells's fine suavity, his *otium cum dignitate* which very nearly suggests Renan, might well be commended to his aspiring countrymen and countrywomen who are trying to build up a social legend in this Republic. The good manners of this respected American author almost constitute an anachronism.

But, alas! this admirable writer, this unwearied analyist of middle-class emotions, this patient his-

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torian of what we may call the still-life of undaring souls, lacks the one thing which Heine deemed essential to a true celebrity—*passion.*

If Mr. Howells ever had a moment of real passion, he forgot to make a literary record of it and thus missed his chance of immortality.

Politeness and style will not carry his baggage of eighty-six books beyond the next generation. They will presently be superseded by Mrs. Croly's works on decorum and the etiquette of afternoon teas.

Robert Louis Stevenson in a famous piece of writing applauds the fellow who, fearing not death so much as a barren and inglorious old age, risks all on one throw, dares something great,—*i. e.,* passionate,—and, though he lose his life in the venture, yet in the old classic way somehow shoots up again and becomes a constellation!

Heroism of this kind is not to the liking of Mr. Howells, and is especially repugnant to his literary system.

There is not one generous blaze, one leaping up of the fire in any of his books. Sometimes you would swear that you heard the sputter of a match and saw a little blue flame, but the conflagration never takes place—Mr. Howells is always ready with the extinguisher.

I am sorry for Mr. Howells and his lamentable count of books, but why in God's name did he never

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let go of himself? Mark Twain has often shown him how, and Mark Twain will be floated down the ages by that artistic life-preserver which Mr. Howells has always politely, but firmly, declined to use,—*Passion!*

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III

ON WRITING

READING and writing do not mix happily for me. I find it easier and more profitable to do one thing or the other at a time. Single tasks, like single passions, are less wearing.

Some persons with a special and enviable facility of mental detachment are not so conditioned, but I think my rule holds for most. An eager and ductile mind that quickly takes color and sympathy cannot give itself to another, if it have work of its own to do. My book is a love affair or nothing to me. I set up no rivalry to my author by composing along with him. I am a good subject and pretend no false rights in *his* kingdom. My own claims (however small) lie *perdu* and unasserted. I hear him fairly to the end—he has naught to complain of his audience. These, I may be allowed to say, are the marks of a good reader; one who keeps terms with the civil community of books.

Turn and turn about, however. I also like to have the ball in my hand, to be humored and deferred to when the business is of writing. Then

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will I not lose myself in another's mind or treacle my mental legs in the sweetest and most seductive of his pages.

Under which king, Bezonian? No double loyalty, no divided allegiance is now possible, be the question of the greatest. Homer himself, that royal brigantine, will I not salute when struggling with my own tiny craft in perilous waters!

Great authors have told us so much about the pleasure of mental creation that one may have leave to wonder why they should expect to be paid for it (some have rather insisted on this point!) I suspect there is not a little coquetry in this favorite assumption of authors, and I'm not sure that the very great—greater—greatest of them enjoys the work as fully as he would have us (especially the ladies) believe. The heats of inspiration, of course; but how often are they preceded by long fits of languid and spiritless inaction; the mind lying sullen and infecund, often in the most puerile terror and despair; the impotent genius chewing the bitter-sweet cud of past triumphs and happy labors!

And granting the heats, those fortunate apotheoses of the artist (perhaps they mean only the workman and his tools in prime condition), what stern labor must be done in cold blood upon the products thereof! What trivialities, stupidities, ineptitudes, must be deleted from the "inspired" copy! What unaccountable lapses in the logic of things corrected!

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What slips of memory that would shame a schoolboy! Truly, this Minerva was not born full-panoplied from her parent's brain (*pace* the Great Author in conversation with the ladies!) Happy the writer who is himself at once the kindest and the most unsparing of the critics of his work!

"I know what pleasure is," finely said Robert Louis, "for I have done good work." And indeed when the mind bends eagerly to its task, and the pen has to canter to keep up with it, and the road stretches clean away without a flaw or a break for miles, why here is somewhat to tune a man to the top of his spirit and make him in love with the oft-trodden yet ever uncharted realm of intellectual adventure!

The admirable Daudet gives this charming account of a period of productive labor in his "Thirty Years of Paris." I am sure you will thank me for borrowing it, and I am glad therewith to lend some grace to my own poor observations.

"The best guarded, the most carefully closed of our Paris houses are yet open to many unforeseen distractions. . . . In the country the space is vast, the air fresh, time seems endless; and, free to dispose at will of the long days and of self, one feels, above all, the security of this independence, the reassuring sensation of being really alone with one's idea. It is an orgy of thought and of work. I never felt it more so than when writing 'Jack.' This

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time of unceasing production has left me delightful memories. Long before daylight I was installed at my white wood table close to my bed in the dressing room. I wrote by lamplight, beneath a skylight pearled with dew, which reminded me of my early days of poverty. Cats and other roamers of the night prowled upon the roof, scratching the tiles, an owl hooted, cattle lowed in the warm straw of a stable close by; and without glancing at the alarm clock ticking in front of me, without lifting my eyes to the gradual lightening of the dawn, I knew the hour by the crowing of the cocks, by the sounds of movement in the neighboring farm, whence rose a clatter of wooden shoes, of bucket-handles falling as the beasts were watered; gruff voices hailing each other in the gray of early dawn; and the clamor, the cackling, and flapping of heavy wings. Then, upon the road, the sleepy tramp of work-people passing by in gangs; and, a little later, a flock of children running to the school three miles off, sounding like the passing flight of a covey of partridges."

* * * * *

Sometimes when Emerson wished to come to collar-and-elbow terms with the Over-Soul he would flee from his quiet home at Concord to a hotel in Boston. There, alone and undisturbed in the heart of the big town, he often found the inspiration denied him in his country retreat. And always he

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came back cheerful and smiling to Mrs. Emerson, with a good-sized wad of copy in his gripsack; happy as any man should be who gets a due profit of his natural vocation. To realize that there is sap in it yet, that we are not becoming the snuff o' younger spirits, is the best satisfaction a man can have who lives the life of the mind. The good wife never suspected Another Woman as the occasion of these sudden flights of the Philosopher—she knew it was the Idea. And, be it said, the Idea is more elusive and capricious than any woman—(the thought is mine, not Waldo's, who took a somewhat negligible view of the gentler sex). . . .

Perhaps Mrs. Emerson broke in upon the great man too frequently in order to ask him how he was getting on—even the best ordered wives are secretly jealous of the Muse. However that may have been, I think there is virtue in Emerson's plan. The town is provocative of thought, if you be in it but not of it; the mind is stirred to action as by sympathy with the great throbbing human machine. For books are human and made for humans—I doubt if ever a book beloved of the world came out of a desert. It has been pointed out, by the way, how Stevenson's invention failed him in his South Sea solitudes.

I tried not long ago to write (in my nibbling fashion) during a vacation sojourn in a rural place, utterly free from distraction; but had small profit of the time. The eye is ever seduced by a wide

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prospect of green fields; thought becomes diffuse and concentration painful; the mind dreams and is lost in the visible vastness of Nature. Finally, I conclude that Emerson was right in this as in most things. The Idea is a cockney calling for ale and chimney pots, and for what an inspired Urbanite has named "the sweet security of streets."

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IV

STYLE AND THE MAN

IT was no less modest a person than myself who first had the honor of remarking that nothing makes a man so hated as the possession of a true literary style. God has sent me no lack of enemies—and you may account for them as you please. (If this be treason, look up your Patrick Henry!)

I raise the point now *apropos* of the best known, many think the greatest, living writer, Rudyard Kipling. Some finicky persons would indeed hold him as an exception, being without style, as they contend, in the regular sense and understanding of the term or quality. However, this will not serve to exclude Mr. Kipling, because a true definition of style is "adequacy of expression." Now there manifestly never was expression more adequate than his, either in prose or verse, when he is equal to himself.

Is this, then, the reason that he is hated so cordially by artistic and literary folk? Admiring his work as I do and longing to hear intimately of the

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man who has done so much for us all, I have for years been seeking personal, first-hand impressions, estimates, appreciations, what you will, of the man Kipling. It has been my fortune, good or bad, to meet a number of persons who had been able to get near enough to him for such familiar observation. A few of these persons were uncommonly well qualified for such an office, trained observers of life and character like Kipling himself. I could not propose to myself any reasonable ground for bias in their judgment or error in their perception. But I have already anticipated the verdict. To put it quite plainly, they hadn't a good word for him. There was nothing to his talk—not a hint of the magic that lies across so many pages or is condensed into so many of the aptest and most striking epithets in literature. Pompous, self-conceited, snobbish, self-conscious, priggish, banal, peevish and fractious, without a visible ray of the redeeming kindliness of genius or even a hint of his thaumaturgic mental power—this is what they told me of the man who has taught us all so much about men and women—who may be said to have added a new chapter to the Book of the Heart.

Are such contradictions possible? you ask.

Undoubtedly. Take a few instances at random. Congreve, saluted as a great dramatist, preferred the glory of a man of fashion. Goldsmith "wrote like an angel and talked like a poor Poll"; he was

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vain and weak and foolish. Sterne was a foul sensual hypocrite. Byron was as vain of his dandyism as of his rank or his verse. Balzac hungered for the fame of a man about town. Dickens, who "never wrote a word that could call up a blush of shame to the cheek of innocence," wound up with a painful domestic scandal; also, he was a good deal of a home-tyrant, even according to his idolater Yates. We know now that Thackeray, the stern satirist, loved another man's wife for many years (though no poaching is alleged); worse yet, that he told only the truth in confessing himself akin to the snobs whom he so brilliantly castigated. Our own Bret Harte, upon the success of his books in England, took up his residence there and became, especially to his own countrymen, quite the most odious and offensive snob that the Mother Country ever acquired from us. And that is in its way as notable a distinction as his achievements in fiction.

So you see there is good literary code and precedent for the views of Kipling set forth above, unwelcome and disagreeable as they are. But, mind you, I don't accept them for myself. I incline to my favorite, perhaps original, theory, suggested in the beginning,—that both the difficulty and the explanation are involved in Mr. Kipling's wonderful style.

Thackeray would never admit, in spite of the whimsical confession above alluded to, that a snob

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could under any circumstances write like a gentleman. Now it must be allowed that Kipling has so written from time to time, and even like a "gentleman unafraid." . . .

To extend the personal instance: the question whether an author's character may be divined from his style is one of extreme and perilous nicety, involving many contradictions. Thus, on the basis of some scandalous revelations by Maupassant's valet in a book of memoirs recently published, that famous writer is believed to have fallen into habits of erotic degeneracy and perversion which resulted in his mental breakdown and untimely death. This monstrous fable has been refuted by Paul Bourget and other intimates of the dead artist, and it is unquestionably without real foundation. But—and this is the core of the matter—*all excess is related* and may lead to the same effects. *The kind does not matter so much as the degree:* drink or worry or overwork are different roads to the same goal. Genius, says Balzac, finds as short a road as dissipation to the madhouse and the hospital. Maupassant felt that his brain was hypertrophied from constant production. This should be considered along with his famous admission, in a letter to Marie Bashkirtseff, that "women were his passion." His writings, or the greater part of them, tell the same story. And that story is surely tragical enough without importing into it elements of needless horror and infamy.

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Yet it may not be denied that there was a certain tragic fitness in the fate of Maupassant. No writer has ever made women so absorbingly his study—they were his passion in art as in life. Perhaps no writer has unveiled with so firm a hand the darker side of their psychology. Again, in art as in life, he stayed not long with any mistress; but most of them live with such an intensity of life as is given to few of the marionettes of fiction. Recall "Yvette," "Une Fille d'une Ferme," and "Boule de Suif" as contrasted types. He who has passed through the stern gallery which bears the name of Maupassant can no more forget the legends thereof than the heart-searching experiences of his own life.

By the way, Oscar Wilde was adjudged guilty by an English court of unspeakable immoralities. Yet his writings are entirely free from obscenity. And his biographer Sherard testifies that in a close acquaintance with him extending over sixteen years, he never heard Wilde utter an impure word, nor would he listen to a "broad" story.

The upshot of all this would seem to be that a man's writings afford no safe clue to his personal character or morality.

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V

A LOST BOHEMIAN

WILLIAM WINTER'S memories of New York's literary Bohemia fifty years ago, have a great charm and never lack interest, even though many figures recalled by the veteran writer have long since passed out of common recollection. The reason for this lies in Mr. Winter himself, or rather in his wonderful art of vitalizing these (often) thin shades of departed worthies. It was a thing well worth doing, and Mr. Winter has done it excellently well.

Perhaps the most satisfactory way for a man to reveal himself is by telling us about his friends. Many people will prize these "Memories" more for the intimate revelation of William Winter which they unwittingly offer than for the sketches of not a few among his neglected contemporaries. Like Desdemona, they will attend more to Othello than to his tale, and they will like best that part of it of which he himself is the theme. It must be allowed that such readers will be fully warranted in their preference. Mr. Winter's latest work is all that we

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have a right to expect from this true gentleman and most worthy man of letters.

The value of the service he has performed in writing about men whose names are lost to the present generation will, of course, be questioned; yet it may have been a wise as well as generous thing to do. Thackeray confesses that the wisest and most talented persons whom he had known were neither authors nor in any way famous. Too much virtue and excellence pass unnoted of the world, while too much base coin goes current. This was evidently a prime thought with Mr. Winter in shaping his reminiscences, for he says:

"It is a fact within the experience of every close observer of his time, that men and women of extraordinary ability and charm pass across the scene and vanish from it, making a potent impression of character, of mind, and even of genius, yet leaving no enduring evidence of their exceptional worth. Such persons, of whom the world hears nothing, are sometimes more interesting than some persons—writers and the like—of whom the world hears much."

Among the actors in this lost Bohemia of New York, depicted by Mr. Winter, the most striking and memorable seems to have been the Irish poet and soldier of fortune, Fitz-James O'Brien. Mr. Winter calls him the most representative Bohemian

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writer whom it had been his fortune to know, and he speaks of him with the frankest admiration. Yet how many reading persons know anything about him? A nimble, fiery spirit, capable alike of wild excesses and of tremendous fits of literary industry, reckless, intolerant of the slightest control, generous, improvident, living the day with utter zest and heedless of the morrow,—Fitz-James O'Brien merits something more than the faint echo and colorless outline of him that have come down to us. Mr. Winter has impartially and with good heart supplied the lack, thereby giving light and life to his own chronicle. In the present dearth of original talent, one would think some publisher might have the courage and the enterprise to do for Fitz-James O'Brien what has been so thoroughly done for Poe; it would bring him, I dare predict, both honor and profit.

Much of O'Brien's work was of a fugitive character and is lost; enough remains, Mr. Winter tells us, to make a volume of five hundred pages. He wrote many poems, a few plays, and two or three of the most powerful short stories in our literature, rivaling, if they do not surpass, the best tales of Poe. His poems were struck off in a heat, and, therefore, often lack the last touches of the file; but they have vigor, passion and imaginative power beyond most verse of the present day. His "Lost Steamship" is a wonderful feat of genius, a piece

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of mingled awe and horror without a parallel in American literature. Regarding this poem, Mr. Winter says:—

"A steamship has been recently wrecked on the Atlantic coast, with much loss of life. The poem is the story of the disaster, and that story is told to a fisherman on the shore by a person who seems at first to be the only survivor of the wreck. The speaker declared that all on board the ship were drowned—the last man to go down with her being the second mate; then suddenly he stands revealed as the ghost of that mariner, the final victim engulfed by the sea. I have heard many readings: I have never heard one in which afflicting reality, hysterical excitement, shuddering fear and tremendous pathos, were so strangely blended as they were in O'Brien's reading of his 'Lost Steamship.'"

O'Brien told the best story of a prize fight in verse, as Conan Doyle has done it in prose. I have not seen the poem in twenty years, but it left on my mind the impress of a bare and brutal, yet most genuine, piece of art. Fiercely as he improvised,—as though conscious that his time was short and his call imminent,—he wrote little that was negligible or worthless.

The life of Fitz-James O'Brien was, however, a good deal more of a romance than any literary work he has left us. There runs through it much of the devil-may-care spirit, the reckless love of adventure,

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and withal the attaching magnetism of "Barry Lyndon" or "Harry Lorrequer." In a word, an Irishman's true romance, for no trait of the Celt was lacking in O'Brien, and he possessed, besides, genius that under a more benign fate should have written his name with the great ones of his race.

Graduated from Dublin University, O'Brien spent an inheritance of $40,000 in two years and then came to this country to make hazard of his literary fortunes. He could not have chosen a worse time—it was the period just before the Civil War, when appreciation of literary art in America was at the lowest, and compensation, therefore, of the meanest. O'Brien cast in his lot with the literary Bohemians of New York, when, as Mr. Winter pointedly reminds us, New York had *real* literary Bohemians—the distinction being a just one. Then followed his too brief career, marked alike by privations and excesses, but redeemed by seasons of brilliant productiveness that have left enduring fruit.

Among the literary free lances of New York in the decade preceding the War, not one feasted and fasted with gayer courage or happier thoughtlessness than Fitz-James O'Brien. He was, in truth, the *beau sabreur* of that adventurous company who made trial of their wits against the world, and alone of them all his name and his song will perhaps be saved from oblivion. Mr. Winter speaks of O'Brien's "uncommonly attractive aspect, his ath-

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letic figure, genial face, fair complexion, pleasing smile, waving brown hair and winning demeanor." Bohemia is cruel to her darling children, like all passionate mistresses, and she did not spare this fine portrait, yet in his latest memory of the poet Mr. Winter can still say of him:—"His expressive gray eyes were clear and brilliant; his laughter was bluff and breezy; his voice was strong and musical; his manner was gay, and he was a cheerful companion, making the most of To-day and caring not at all for To-morrow."

There is little more to be told. On the outbreak of the War, O'Brien offered his sword to his adopted country, and soon became an aide on General Lander's staff. His bravery was marked from the moment he entered the service, although he had a presentiment of his early death, which warning is often the sad privilege of poetic natures. After a merry-making in camp, where all had sung the song from Don Cæsar de Bazan, "Then let me like a soldier die," he spoke of this feeling to a comrade, but remarked, with characteristic courage, that he was content. Within a few days afterward he met a soldier's death at Harper's Ferry. . . .

"Poet, romancer, wanderer, soldier, he sung his song, he told his story, he met his fate like a brave man, giving his life to his adopted country, and dying—with much promise unfulfilled—only thirty-four years old."

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These are the words of the true friend and lover of his memory to whom we owe this pathetic, fascinating glimpse of a romantic life and a glorious though broken career. They are not unworthy to be inscribed upon the tomb of Fitz-James O'Brien.

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VI

SHAKESPEARE

MARY FITTON was a maid of dishonor and quality at the court of Elizabeth the Virgin Queen of ironical history. She was beautiful and she had many lovers, to several of whom she was lavish of her kindness, in the free manner of the time. The natural result followed—she bore children to two or three of them before she was finally married off, for appearance sake, no doubt, to a person of the plebeian name of Polwhele. We cannot be sure that she lived happy ever afterward, as the story books say, but at any rate she disappeared from the scene.

One of her most favored lovers was William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, still reputed Shakespeare's leman and the Mr. W. H. of the sonnets. To him she bore a son, and to Sir Richard Leveson two daughters, according to old gossip. Her wayward fancies sometimes declined lower: she is suspected of favoring a comedian by name Kemp in Shakespeare's company, and for years she tolerated,

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if she did not return, the love of the Master Playwright himself.

Such, at least, is the contention of Mr. Frank Harris in his book, "The Man Shakespeare"; and if it stopped there the matter might be dismissed as likely enough or not worth the trouble of refuting. But Mr. Harris constructs me—with devilish ingenuity, it must be said—a plot out of this Mary Fitton's alleged relations with Pembroke and Shakespeare and thereby attempts a novel interpretation of the Poet's greatest works. In a word, Shakespeare's betrayed and unsatisfied passion for Mary Fitton is made to figure as the *"causa causans,"* the compelling motive, of Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Anthony and Cleopatra, Cymbeline, Troilus and Cressida, etc.

This is a bold theory, to be sure, and if it was never thought of before, as the author exultantly declares, it is only because the time was not ripe for it. The present age—let us say hour—is feminist above all things in its view of art. Mr. Harris is a true child of the age and hour. Hence his theory of the motive cause behind Shakespeare's terrible dramas of love, jealousy, passion and revenge. There's as neat a syllogism as you could ask for.

But though we need not grant to Mr. Harris's theory anything like the importance he claims for it, we must confess that he has made thereupon a most fascinating and delightful book, which any lover or

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student of Shakespeare would be sorry to miss. Refusing to see Shakespeare's "romance" as Mr. Harris sees it, there is yet much profit in his book. The literary criticism, pure and simple, is most original and suggestive; the study of the Poet's character is in many points a marvel of divination; while the sketch of his life, in two chapters, is the most readable and satisfactory that I have ever met with.

Mr. Harris views Shakespeare as a man of intensely sensual nature, and indeed rests the burden of his "theory" upon the undoubted passion and sensualism of the Poet. It has become too much the fashion to deny all faults in Shakespeare, even those that reveal his fierce-burning humanity. Readers of *Papyrus* may recall that a few years ago I expressed a similar view of Shakespeare, in these remarks addressed to Mr. William Winter:

Has any writer ever more thoroughly explored the seamy side of human nature than your favorite playwright? Has any ever shown a more instructed, not to say loving, familiarity with every detail of the stews and the brothel? Do you know of any poet or playwright richer or more expert in the language and images of lawless passion? Or any who, to speak plainly, more deliberately "ran to the thing" and salted his strongest and most characteristic work with it? Do you really think that Shakespeare could have gotten any points from Sir Pandarus of Troy? That the author of the "Merry

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Wives" and "Pericles" was, however great his genius, a cleaner-minded man than G. B. Shaw? Finally, that the absurdity ever occurred to him of writing a play with a moral purpose?

Shakespeare cares no more for morality, the morality of plackets and codpieces, than Nature herself. It will not do to plead the old excuse of the license of the times and the stage—Shakespeare too often goes out of his way to lug in filth, does it from pure love of the muck and nastiness as much as from the Elizabethan notion that he was providing a good substitute for wit. Let this favorite subject of his be up, and at once, to use his own phrase, he is "hot as goats at prime, as salt as monkeys." In truth he has not left a vigorous image in kind for any of his successors. None of Shakespeare's plays can be acted without expurgation; they all reek of the rankness of his grosser mind; even the immortal poem of "Romeo and Juliet" and the sweet drama of "Cymbeline" are disfigured by many foul passages in which the poet leaps about with lewd gestures, like one of Dante's obscene fiends.

Mr. Harris rather unduly stresses the point that the immortal William Shakespeare was a snob. This was no news to most people, although perhaps the fact will bear restating in view of the traditional fog of hero-worship surrounding the Poet. Tolstoy had exposed it in the course of a cruel dissection of the British Idol. The late Ernest Crosby wrote

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some powerful essays on the subject. That Shakespeare hated, or affected to hate, the common people is evident from a hundred references in the Plays,—as evident, say, as that Mr. Henry James has a preference for polite society. He is fond of telling the rabble that they stink in their persons, their breath and their clothes. He has only contempt for mechanics and workingmen generally—witness the foolish comedy (as apart from the poetry) of the "Midsummer Night's Dream." And much else of the same quality that every reader will recall.

On the other hand, when the matter has to do with persons of rank or noble blood, the Poet is always found groveling on his English belly. The sycophancy which he expresses, and the terms in which his terribly facile gift of speech enables him to clothe his abject worship of place and power and "gentle blood," are nothing short of disgusting to any modern reader who is not himself a snob by overt choice or secret election. But, dear me! why does Mr. Harris plague us with all this damnable iteration to the point? One would think there had been no literary snobs since Shakespeare, or that snobbishness (*malgré* Thackeray) was not now, as always, a distinctive badge among the scribbling tribe. . . .

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In another generation or so Shakespeare will be as infrequently acted as the Greek Plays. At this

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moment there is but one tolerable company representing him in America, a country done to death with mummers. I went to see this company not long ago (it is that headed by Sothern and Marlowe) and was confirmed in the prediction just made. Although the play ("As You Like It") had been modernized and prettified as much as possible, with lots of business that sweet William never contemplated, it plainly did not "get to" the bulk of the audience. I, who have known by heart most of the lines since boyhood, felt it was boring and tedious, not because we were "a quantity of barren spectators" or because the acting was bad—no, it was simply due to Shakespeare being out of date, though it be treason dire to whisper such a thing.

There is no doubt about it, however. I yield to no man of woman born in love and loyalty to the Bard, and I still feel that in possessing myself of him in early youth I gained the better part of my education. Nor do I think that he will cease to be *read* so long as the English tongue is spoken. But that the stage will soon see little of him I am confident. His language is mostly antiquated or obsolete and often puzzling even to the well educated, who are not numerous enough to support the theatre. I could see at the performance mentioned that many of his "palpable hits" were lost on the audience, and their approval was of that strained sort that betokens imperfect comprehension. It was clear that they

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wanted to love Rosalind, that darling of all Shakespeare's women, but much of her talk was Greek to them. I should blush to confess (I suppose) that I had rather a dull time of it myself, and I was decidedly vexed to find an alien something between me and my old favorites, *Jaques* and *Touchstone*.

The truth is (though nobody will hear of it in this case) that Shakespeare is still played largely in compliment to an august and venerable tradition. His speech is foreign to an average present-day audience, his sentiment often unintelligible, his passion rather absurd, and his humor grotesque rather than amusing—(it takes a rare order of genius to make a Shakespearean clown funny at this time of day). Again, modern dramatic technique does not permit of long speeches, which are at once the bane and the great virtue of Shakespeare, for while they delay the action they contain most of his poetry. I fear these long speeches bred a special sort of vice in generations of mummers, of which we shall be glad to see the end. Quiet, natural acting, the chief requirement in the best art of to-day, could never have been deemed desirable in plays that are mainly contests in oratory and, to use the Bard's own happy phrase, *windy suspiration of forced breath*. Mr. Sothern, an excellent and well graced actor, tried the quiet modern method with the famous speech of *Jaques*, "All the world's a stage," and it seemed to me quite unhappily. This, like most of Shake-

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speare's long speeches, calls for action and the utmost art of the orator. The earliest traditions of the acted Shakespearean drama are all to this effect: the *lines* were the thing rather than the play (in disagreement with *Hamlet*), and so the speech of actors took on in course of time a peculiarity of character which led to the mummers being themselves mimicked in popular burlesque.

Od's-pitikins, as the Bard would have said, I am becoming somewhat tedious and long-winded myself. Howbeit, I have spoken to my cue, to wit, that our children's children will have fewer chances than are open to us of seeing the Shakespearean drama. For though it be certainly true that he was "not for a day but for all time," yet is change written upon all things, and the stage will one day be closed to the mightiest of its monarchs. Never, we may be sure, the Book in which he rules the hearts and the imaginations of men.

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VII

THE CARLYLES

I AM urged to republish the following article from a book of mine now out of print, in view of the recent publication of the Letters of the Carlyles. The book was edited and put together by Mr. Alexander Carlyle, a nephew of the great writer, and is held to refute utterly and finally the tragic legend of unhappiness conjured up by Froude. At least one would be led to think so from the notices in the press, our American reviewers taking the palm for cowardice, incompetency, nambypambyness and insincerity. It being conventionally agreed that Froude's story ought, in the interests of conventionality, to be suppressed and written down, our pressmen take their cue with mealy-mouthed eagerness. And we have another instance of the thing which lately roused Mr. Zangwill's wonder,—the shrinking pudency of the American publisher!

In point of fact, this book has nothing to say to the painful revelation made by Froude in his pamphlet, "My Relations with Carlyle." That story may or may not be true, but it is quite unaffected by any-

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thing contained in these letters of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh, or in the editor's wrathful contribution to the work. What the story is, the reader who likes to judge for himself and who does not like to have his mind made up for him by Scotch nephews and Yankee reviewers, may learn below.

There was a man great of intellect, world-famous, who during nearly half a century poured forth a gospel that was largely leavened with hatred and scorn of human kind. Sprung from the lowest ranks of the people, nurtured on poverty's most congenial soil, this man never ceased to advocate with stormy eloquence the Rule of the Strong. Rarely, if ever, were his sympathies with the weak and disinherited of the earth,—the class from which he fetched his being. Power and the symbols of power (though he might sometimes affect to gibe at these) were the materials of his worship and the incentives of his genius. Waging bitter war against what he called shams, he yet upheld with all the force of his mind the colossal Shams of Power, of Property and Rank, by which humanity has been held in subjection since the dawn of history. The topmost effort of his talent was and remains a misreading and a travesty of the most salutary event in modern history—the French Revolution. His chosen heroes for the most part incarnated the ideal of power which he worshipped. Yet he was not consistent

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even in the chief article of his creed, for, though hating and despising the people, he sometimes canted of democracy; and, though reverencing the hem of Cæsar's robe, he sometimes indemnified his haughty spirit by a fling at the Superior Classes.

As an individual, this man yielded complete respect to no human being, and he never met one whom he would acknowledge to be his equal. His references to his literary contemporaries, even those who had furthered his interests and benefited him, are always couched in a tone of disparagement—never was there an intellectual sovereign who bore so ill a brother near the throne.

At last he died, full of years and bitterness, yet a little softened by time and sorrow, as he would have us, somewhat shamefacedly, believe in his latest memorials. The pity of mankind was irresistibly drawn to the forlorn and loveless end of one who had been so long a great voice in letters, a prophet and a witness of the times. Then came the trusted friend of his last years, the custodian of his sacred honor, charged to report him and his cause aright to the unsatisfied,—and did the act abominable upon his grave! . . .

Froude has been heartily cursed for his exposure of the Carlyle family skeleton, and up to the present his case seems to have gone a-begging for defenders. Certainly no man ever took upon himself a worse or more shameful function than did Froude

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—to lift, for all the world to see, the breech-clout of the great man who had honored him with as much friendship and esteem as it was in his nature to allow any one, and had charged him with the most sacred trust one man can lay upon another. The head and front of Froude's offending is seen in these excerpts from his pamphlet, "My Relations with Carlyle":

"Various hints were dropped in the circle which gathered at the house in Cheyne Row about the nature of the relations between them (the Carlyles), that their marriage was not a real marriage, and was only a companionship," etc.

* * * * *

"Geraldine Jewsbury was Mrs. Carlyle's most intimate and most confidential friend. . . . She was admitted into Cheyne Row on the closest terms. Mrs. Carlyle in her own troubles spoke and wrote of Geraldine Jewsbury as her Consuelo. . . . When she (Miss Jewsbury) heard that Carlyle had selected me to write his biography, she came to me to say that she had something to tell me which I ought to know. I must have learnt that the state of things had been most unsatisfactory; the explanation of the whole of it was that Carlyle was one of those persons who ought never to have married. Mrs. Carlyle had at first endeavored to make the best of the position in which she found herself. But

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his extraordinary temper was a consequence of his organization. As he grew older and more famous, he had become more violent and overbearing. She had longed for children, and children were denied to her. This had been at the bottom of all the quarrels and all the unhappiness. . . . She (Miss Jewsbury) said that Mrs. Carlyle never forgave the injury which she believed herself to have received."

* * * * *

"I had observed in Mrs. Carlyle's Diary that immediately after the entry of the blue marks on her arms, she had spent a day with Geraldine at Hampstead. I asked Miss Jewsbury if she recollected anything about it: She remembered it only too well. The marks were made by (Carlyle's) personal violence."

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"She (Miss Jewsbury) did not live long after this. In her last illness, when she knew that she was dying, and when it is entirely inconceivable that she would have uttered any light or ill-considered gossip, she repeated all this to me, with many curious details. I will mention one, as it shows that Carlyle did not know, when he married, what his constitution was. *The morning after his wedding day he tore to pieces the flower garden at Comley Bank in a fit of ungovernable fury.*"

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This is awful, and perhaps at all points it has no parallel in literary biography. Yet I believe the final judgment of the world will not be so harsh upon Froude as it is at present. I believe his offence, bad as it must be deemed, arose from a perverted casuistry rather than from a motive of conscious and deliberate malice. If Froude was the devil in this business, let us at least give the devil his due. He was himself a writer of high performance, endued with more than the usual sensitiveness that belongs to the literary character. He was naturally solicitous about his own reputation—had not he, also, a name to leave to future times, and should he suffer an evil blot upon it? He saw himself attacked by the greedy and unscrupulous Scotch relatives of Carlyle. His feelings were deeply injured. His honor was impeached and the basest motives were attributed to him. Something of all this was due to Carlyle's own vacillating, uncandid course with regard to the nature and extent of the responsibility which he had imposed upon Froude. The latter disclaims any personal ill-feeling toward Carlyle upon this or any other account, but one can hardly doubt that he resented the clumsy checks and balances that hindered his task and at last brought it to ruin. It is enough, from Froude's point of view, that he had done a great and peculiarly thankless labor in fulfilling his trust toward Carlyle. It had involved, first, a painful responsibility, then a host

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of anxieties, and, last of all, it had drawn a maddening persecution upon his closing term of life, which, as he tells us, he had looked forward to as a peaceful harbor. Baited by all the pack, wounded, desperate and dying, he struck out in defence of his honor and good faith; and, passing into the Silence, left his vindication to the world.

Whatever judgment we may form as to the means he employed to clear his name, it will be difficult to impeach the sincerity of Froude's solemn witness in the shadow of death. I, for one, do not believe, as so many affect to believe, that his last act in this world was to erect a monumental slander to the memory of his friend. To hold this detestable view, which has been lightly assumed by the mob of Froude's censors, were to think worse of human nature than Carlyle himself did in his most lycanthropic humor. . . .

I have said that Froude's disclosure concerning Carlyle cannot at all points be matched by any instance known to me in literary biography. This statement has regard to the eminence of both men, the nature of the trust imposed upon Froude, and the entire moral history of the affair. But as to Carlyle's alleged sexual impotency there need, of course, be no vulgar wonder, since it is a common enough physical misfortune. Yet it is this matter, as declared baldly in Froude's posthumous pamphlet, which has chiefly infuriated the old maids of the

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literary press, as if it were not under Heaven conceivable that the author of "Sartor Resartus" should have lacked the power to beget a child of his body! Well, we have the best evidence for believing that the author of "The Stones of Venice" labored under a similar incapacity, and the regrettable fact, though it lost him his beautiful wife (who, woman-like, thought less of his genius than of certain other things), seems in no way to have impaired the virility of his style; yet I believe, as in the case of Carlyle, that it is answerable for the scolding element in so much of his work. Oh, you ladies of both sexes, have you never heard the true story of one who was a greater genius, a greater scold and a fiercer hater of humanity than even your idol Carlyle? Have you never wept over the piteous tragedy of Stella, which moved the kindly cynic Thackeray to his finest pathos? Was the secret of Swift the secret of Carlyle?—Look at this parallel:

Froude.—He (Carlyle) had said, in his journal, that there was a secret connected with him unknown to his closest friends; that no one knew and no one would know it, and that without a knowledge of it no true biography of him was possible.

Thackeray.—A remarkable story is told by Scott, of Delany, who interrupted Archbishop King and Swift in a conversation which left the prelate in tears, and from which Swift rushed away with marks of strong terror and agitation in his countenance,

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upon which the Archbishop said to Delany, "You have just met the most unhappy man on earth; but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question."

Swift was many years in his grave ere the legend crystallized which is now held to explain the riddle of his relations with Stella and Vanessa, as also of a great part of his misanthropy. In what seems the similar case of Carlyle the world has not been obliged to wait for the legend, thanks to the ill-advised attacks upon the man who knew the story and who was goaded into telling it. The Swift legend belongs to an age of greater immorality, perhaps; of less publicity, certainly, than our own. It is probable enough, though supported only by the vaguest hearsay. The chief witness, the injured party, never blabbed, so far as we know, and died with her secret. Stella had no Geraldine Jewsbury to confide in, and she submitted her will to the terrible Dean (who could yet be so kind and loving!) in all ways. Besides, and this is the core of it, she loved Swift with a great yet humble passion and with the fullest surrender of self; he was her god, her idol in whom she would never see nor admit defect. Quarrel with him?—why, she could not have survived one angry look from his awful brow, but would have perished under his frown, as did her unhappy rival of many years. This was a very different thing to the love of Jane Welsh for the great man

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to whom fate had united her and in whose tragic life-story her name will now forever bear a painful interest. A story, says Froude, as sternly tragic, as profoundly pathetic, as the great Theban drama.

. . .

Yes, the secret of Swift was the secret of Carlyle, but the greatest satirist that has ever lashed the follies and vices of mankind never conceived such a masterpiece of ironic fury as that scene at Comley Bank on the morning after Carlyle's wedding day! This is the heaviest clod of humiliation that Froude cast upon that grave in Ecclefechan churchyard. It is enough to move our pity for the great man, so tragically shamed by the disclosure, who was himself but little given to pitying the weakness and misfortunes of our common humanity.

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VIII

THE PRIEST AND THE WOMAN

OLIVE RANSOM, in "A Woman's Heart," has endeavored to tell the story of a young woman who loved a priest of the Roman Catholic faith not wisely but too well.

A very foolish thing to do, especially as Miss Katherine Peshconet (the young woman in the case) was an intellectual of intellectuals, by her own showing, with a thoroughly awakened distrust of Catholic churchcraft and a controversial turn which is always getting the better of her and of the story. This is at once the weakness and the strength of the book—the fortune of the polemic, the disaster of the drama. The lady doth protest too much and preaches besides, so that the impartial reader is half tempted to condone the unbelievable treachery of her lover. For she has not merely the last but the first word, and, the story being told solely through her letters, the priest is never suffered to speak in his own person. Naturally, our sympathies are with the young woman, but, naturally also, we should like to hear the other party. The one-sided correspond-

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ence does indeed suggest or indicate the priest's course through the unhappy affair, yet the reader asking the plain logic and probability of life has to ask in vain.

This is a familiar trick of women's novels, where, as a rule, sentiment, passion, feeling, emotion, are always better and more convincingly realized than the ordinary facts and combinations of practical existence. We believe the lady when she is in the clouds: we will not take her word when she descends to the basement floor. So it is quite credible that Katherine Peshconet may have loved a priest, and, this being granted, many of her letters give a true and powerful reflex of the sentiment. But her planning to get him out of the Church or to marry him within it, to make a Unitarian or Episcopalian minister of him, or to fix up the affair with the Archbishop (*sancta simplicitas!*) is a puerile piece of business and appears the more so from the fact that the priest has never a word to say for himself—Katherine proposing to arrange all with true American practicality. However, the Church and the Council of Trent are too much for one weak woman, and her spineless priest, having possessed her through a secret marriage, abandons her after long wavering and goes to expiate his "sin" in a remote monastery. Katherine and her infant die together.

A needlessly cruel ending, and one which some

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readers will refuse to accept, even on the author's word. For my part, I do not believe that Rome has bred during several hundred years, or at least since the Council of Trent, a priest base enough to commit the crime and infamy charged to the husband of Katherine Peshconet. One does not expect a woman to fight fair, especially against such an antagonist, and so the author has been tempted at the end to make out too strong a case. This is the woman's way, in fact as in fiction.

The guilty love of priest and woman is not, so far as the world has leave to know, a fact of very common occurrence. That it is possible is, of course, no more to be disputed than human life itself. But it is strange that we hear more about it in fiction than in everyday life, and this is not wholly to be accounted for by the traditional policy of the Church in hushing scandal—a policy which derives its success chiefly from the consent and connivance of the faithful. In fiction, however, the theme is constantly bobbing up, and it seems to harass the "lady novelist" in an aggravated form—no reflection on George Moore, author of "The Lake," whom we cheerfully acknowledge to be anything but a lady. Hardly a season passes without one or more novels dealing with an over-sexed priest who has forgotten his vows and risked the Catholic Heaven for love, on meeting a young woman who has helped him dis-

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cover his unused virility. Such novels, whether good or bad, appeal to a curiosity part sectarian, part prurient, and are bound to have a sale; perhaps this fact alone guarantees their annual appearance.

However, this motive would not apply to the better class of such fictions, and it does not apply to Olive Ransom's book. With all its defects of omission and commission, one is convinced that the writer was sincere, that the pen often burned in her hand, that her tears not seldom fell on the page before her, that her heart was convulsed with no fictitious grief, that behind the slender fable she has given us there was some reality of suffering and sorrow, some martyrdom of a woman's soul, which moved her to the task. Such a cry as this, such a breaking up of the depths, compels a sympathy which the many artistic shortcomings of the book fail to neutralize:

"I hate it. I hate it. I hate it. . . . It deprives me of hope. I hate it, I say! It takes from me the one I love and condemns me to a loveless, lonely life—when I would know a husband's caresses and the pressure of a son at nurse. I hate it! My health of body and mind lay in you—every happiness my soul longed for. I hate its outrageous authority. I hate it with fierce will, and I pray God punish it with destruction before another woman suffers as I do through its unpitying mechanism. God, God of liberty in human life, take vengeance for the wrong it does me and every woman in my person!"

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I am bound to point out that the worst thing in and about the book is this part of the dedication: "To all women of like histories." Now it may be granted that a case like Katherine Peshconet's is not impossible, since the flesh, even of priests, is weak and truth cannot overcome its old habit of being stranger than fiction. But the thing could never be common enough to justify the implication of the words quoted, and there is consequently more offence in these few words than in the whole of the story. To put the matter plainly, a Catholic woman who should fling herself at a priest's head would know what to expect, supposing him to be fallible—it would not be marriage; and indeed a Catholic woman who would suffer no hindrance to her passion for a priest would yet stop short of that. Now, a non-Catholic woman who should commit a like indiscretion with a view to marrying the priest in spite of Rome and all its powers, would be a fool for her pains. Happily for a world that is full of very real sorrow and suffering, there can be few such cases as that of Katherine Peshconet, and the author has foolishly prejudiced her book by implying the contrary.

The great disappointment of the story lies in the author's failure to make us "realize" the priest. He is the "cause of all the trouble," yet we are never suffered to see him, or to hear his "rich voice," or to read one of those "beautiful letters" of which

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Katherine speaks and which she jealously keeps to herself. Nay, were it not for one distressing physiological fact we should at times take him for a hallucination of Katherine's—one of those strange delusions known to pathology which we beg to assure the author of this book may exist without the slightest reference to the Council of Trent.

Surely never was a lady author so fearful of a man as Olive Ransom is of her nameless priest. This would be intelligible had a recreant Catholic written the story, but that a lady holding such pronounced views on Rome should be afraid to show us a priest without his cassock, while convicting him of an intrigue, is puzzling, to say the least. Not so would the doughty Corelli have ordered the matter, and she would as a prize of courage capture thousands of readers where this book may gain only tens. And it seems the greater pity since, but for this almost unfeminine coyness, the author of "A Woman's Heart" might have given us a valid, finished piece of work, instead of a fragmentary and inconclusive sketch. Truly the rewards of daring, like the hazards, are nowhere so great as in the province of art.

The form which the author has chosen for her story and the limits she has set herself emphasize the fault just pointed out and at the same time mark a singular contradiction. For, while many readers will regard the author's failure to bring the priest upon the scene as a confession of weakness, or at

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least an implied distrust of her powers (though it may well be only a mistaken theory of treatment), yet the heroine herself does not seem to take on gooseflesh at the thought of a priest who is also a man, as witness these extracts:

"Some time after we are married—some time when you are heavy with sleep—I shall pull the covering aside and kiss you right there where the heart beats."

* * * * *

"I wish you were not more than three spans long, that I might enfold you, kiss you, press you against my heart and unblushing tell you all that warms my lips."

* * * * *

"Do you remember how you used to clasp one arm about me and pull down my collar with the other hand and bite my throat, and say to my protest, 'But I like to bite you.' You bear!"

* * * * *

"I send you a kiss for those quivering lips and an embrace for that warm, sweet body for every day of your dear life. . . .

"If fine children are born to parents who love beyond all powers and denials, and have suffered long before at last they are given to each other, how lovely of character and fair of body should our dear children be!"

* * * * *

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"The music is sweeter at vespers when you are there, the rites seem actually holy and God is present in body—if God can be anywhere in body. But the body I see is your body and it is the God in you I adore!"

* * * * *

"Do you remember one evening when I wore a low bodice, how you bade me good night with a pressure of your hand, then, when your eye rested a moment on my neck you started as if swayed by great pain and caught me in your arms, crying: 'Oh, love, love, can God torture me so!' And you pushed down the dress and buried your face as a man dying of thirst would sink his face to a fountain."

* * * * *

"Think of being with you so that I could pass my hand down the bare strength of your arm. I should swoon with delight." . . .

"I yearn for a child who shall have your sweetness and beauty of soul and body." . . .

"I can think of nothing purer, sweeter, fairer than to love you all my life, to lose all sense of self in the fire of our love, to be merged, my soul in your soul, my body in your body."

To keep the object of such passionate love and longing clean out of sight, to give him a mere "thinking part" in the wings while the audience are craning frantically to get a glimpse at him, to leave

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him in Katherine's inkbottle, not even to give him a name—surely here is a striking proof how the woman novelist always falls down in the rationalizing process of her art.

But the book is interesting, for all that, and it has enough genuine feeling and sincerity to redeem it from utter failure. I forgive the author her scraps of Latin and Greek, her crumbs of theological learning, for the vigor and eloquence and tenderness of many passages. She can write bitterly, too, and I suspect her own soul has been scorched in the flame of those ever-burning fires which burn not the less fiercely to-day that they are for the most part hidden from the world. Weak as her polemics often are, and heavily as they overweight the slight story, nevertheless they contain many a telling truth barbed with a woman's keen wit, many an appeal made poignant by a woman's instinctive hatred of hypocrisy and injustice, many a passionate cry that voices the agony of a woman's heart, and withal not a few glimpses of that strangely intuitive wisdom which is vouchsafed only to babes and sucklings—and women of the spiritual mould of Katherine Peshconet.

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IX

BOOKS THAT DIE NOT

THERE is much poppycock uttered by Prof. Maverick Brander and other learned parrots in collegiate chairs touching the sort of literature that "mankind will not willingly let die." As a schoolboy I was led to believe that in the very front row of the eligible candidates for this distinction were "Marco Bozzarris," "Woodman, Spare That Tree," "Over the Hills to the Poorhouse," "Casabianca," "Twenty Years Ago," etc. And it is likely enough that these banalities may survive so long as there are banal people in the world—a good enough assurance of immortality.

Herein is the meat of the matter which the learned parrots aforesaid miss or prefer to keep to themselves. I will state it for them. There is no special, exclusive kind of literature that mankind will not willingly let die; but there are as many kinds as mankind are various. Good—bad, clever—stupid, moral—immoral, religious—irreligious, virtuous—vicious, wise—foolish, fanciful—prosaic,

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and so on: I could pick you books in every class that have come down the ages.

I cannot even leave the professors their pet truism that a book in order to live must have great originality or literary merit. There are plenty of books that have defied the centuries without either. A man can live without brains; why not a book? Answer me that!

Again, it is not to be disputed that no sort of book is so anxiously sought and jealously preserved as the immoral book, or book of free gallantry. (I exclude works merely or avowedly pornographic.) From Petronius Arbiter to Boccaccio, from Brantome and Saint Simon to Pierre Louys, from Chaucer to Samuel Pepys and Defoe, and so down to the libidinous Reynolds, this is a remarkably fertile and copious literature. Booksellers' catalogues will advise you that no item of any importance therein has been lost. Also the prices are always somewhat higher than for ordinary books, perhaps because of the moral taboo on them, perhaps because one does not count his pennies too shrewdly when like John Gilpin he goes, "on pleasure bent."

Notable amongst this class of books are the "memoirs" of court ladies of uneasy or facile virtue harking back to the Seventeenth or Eighteenth century—even from their ashes these lively ladies inflame us! Such books are commonly very expensive, being the favorite reading of the American aris-

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tocracy. The morals of the haughty heroines were no different, however, from those of Defoe's "Moll Flanders," a veracious and valuable history, the price of which is rarely beyond a modest purse.

The memoirs of Count De Grammont is regarded as one of the books which mankind will not willingly let die. Sir Walter Scott edited the classic translation, and he says: "As a merely agreeable book, it perhaps deserves that character more than any which was ever written." Voltaire praised it and Gibbon pronounced it "a favorite work with all persons who have any pretensions to taste." Madame de Staël used to say that it contained, with less matter, more interest than any book she knew. Macaulay characterized it as of all books the most exquisitely French, both in spirit and manner. (By the way, the writer, Anthony Hamilton, was an Irishman.) Nay, it is even asserted that Thackeray found in Grammont's Memoirs the secret of "Esmond" and "Barry Lyndon."

Now, without mincing words about the matter, what is the *real* character of this book for which such eminent suffrages have been given? Frankly and fairly, then, it is one of the most indecent and shameless books in the world. There is hardly one honorable sentiment expressed in this book, save as the author speaks with covert leer or tongue in cheek. The plain virtues of humanity are derided therein with all manner of foul mockery, but none is

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so foully and persistently mocked as the modesty of womanhood. On the other hand, profligacy, lechery and libertinage receive the accolade on every page.

De Grammont, a Frenchman, was mostly of the Restoration Era and, upon his banishment by the great Louis, received a warm welcome at the court of the merry Charles. "For those were the days which (says Macaulay) are never to be recalled without a blush—the days of servitude without loyalty and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave."

A more thoroughly vicious book (outside the catalogue of avowed pornography) was never written. In no book that I am acquainted with is the honor of womanhood so filthily handled, as at a rout of satyrs. To invent or indite or utter a foul jest on a lady (*vide* the untranslatable epigram upon Miss Wells) was not deemed misbecoming to a Courtier of England or a Gentleman of France. In truth he was capable of far worse things, such as falsely swearing away a woman's honor (see Chapter VIII of the Memoirs), or dropping an unspeakable innuendo (see remarks on Miss Hobart—Chapter IX).

The business of De Grammont—if he can be said to have had any—was gambling and his chief amusement gallantry (i. e. seduction and fornication). In both these specialties he is set forth as having been

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enviably successful, but he prefers to give us in detail the amorous intrigues of others, such as the Merry Monarch himself, the Duke of York (who became James II) and various noblemen of the court. As rotten and heartless and despicably worthless a crew were they as ever existed, and one thinks with amazement of the honest English people supporting those lecherous parasites in grandeur—they are still supporting their ill-derived descendants! After more than two hundred years the page yet stinks that tells of their "gallantries"—but the book is one that mankind will not willingly let die.

In this immortal class also must be placed the Poetry of my Lord Rochester,—like Grammont, a shining ornament of the Merry Reign. Of all the rakes of the Restoration Rochester has left the most profligate reputation. Most of the stories told of him are unprintable in our day. He was continuously drunk for several years and he died of his excesses at thirty-three. "They say he made a good end," and Bishop Burnett thinks he might have mended his ways had he lived. This he could easily have done, it may be granted, without attaining any enviable degree of virtue.

Rochester was the laureate of the Stuart lupanar, and his poetry is doubtless the most vilely obscene product, the rank consummate flower of that age, so rich in works that disgrace both talent and human nature. De Grammont and his biographer justly

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admired those infamous poems—I need only say that, endowed as I am with a tolerably strong mental digestion, it is my enduring regret that I ever looked into them. . . . My Lord Rochester died in 1680 and his precious poems continue to be republished from time to time: being apparently among those works which mankind will not willingly let die.

Voltaire's "Pucelle" and "Candide" remain to this day among the most popular of his works.

The late Mark Twain wrote a brochure called "A Fireside Conversation at the Court of the Tudors," which, from its gamey ripeness of expression and unconventional candor of incident, may possibly belong to the class of books under consideration. I have never seen the work—not many people have—but a literary friend of mine used to quote appetizing extracts from it. Frankly, my life will seem to me incomplete unless some day I shall possess a copy of this book. I suspect Mark was a bit shy of it in later years—but who can doubt that it will live as long as anything of his? . . .

I said above that stupid books live as well as clever ones. This, however, is no longer true of books of sermons. A haunter of old-book stalls, I have noted a steady depreciation of this kind of literary lumber for some years back. Books of sermons and of theology seem indeed to be preferred favorites amongst the works that mankind most willingly let die.

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X

ON THE USE OF BOOKS

THE man who lives the life of the mind must have a care that his books do not master him. Of what avail the riches of his library if they leave himself poor and barren? This is the great peril of the studious life, as Emerson has pointed out. Reading can be made a terrible waste of power. It is a duel in which the student is always overmatched—a dissipation in which he engages all and recovers nothing—a complete loss of power and initiative in the achievement of others. The end is always the same—so easy to read, and so terribly hard to write!

Montaigne was admirably shrewd in this as in most things. Though he quotes as much as any original writer and much more than is modernly the fashion, he would not open a book for two or three months at a time. This was giving the rein to his own genius,—for in these matters you must ride or be ridden. To use your books and not to be used by them,—that should be the rule of every thinking and, especially, *writing* man.

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Tragedies have attended the abuse of books. Daudet tells us of a Frenchman known to him, who during many years read and collected books on Shakespeare, planning to produce a great work on the subject. But the more books he got together and the more he read, the more hopeless became the poor man's project. So his life wasted away in fruitless efforts to begin his task—there was always some new book to get or some authority to look up or verify before he could really settle down to work. He spent his life and his fortune in this barren enterprise which, like a great wen, sucked all useful energy and ambition out of him. Daudet's picture of the poor man surrounded by his library,—a species of Frankenstein overawing and enslaving him,—is memorable for its truth and pathos. He died without achieving the title page of his great work—but kept on reading and collecting to the end.

A tragedy of the depths. But even so great a writer and scholar as Macaulay must be judged, in some degree, a victim of books. The pedantry which he succeeded to some degree in excluding from his formal literary work peeps out constantly in his Letters and Journals. Nor does it increase our respect for Macaulay, sterling as he is in most respects, both as scholar and writer. One feels that so great a man should not have been so arrant a slave to his books; that had he read far less the world had gained more from him; that the prodig-

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ious memory of which we hear so much was actually a handicap to the original genius of the man. One wearies of the list of books read—Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.,—and put forward as bespeaking admiration. We are told that he read Photinus, a little known Greek author, and that the Oxford dons were thereby moved to exceeding wonder. Well, and what of it? We can't help thinking the great man might have been better employed, for posterity and reputation. One might cite a hundred instances of the pedantry which, I dare believe, sapped even the vigorous powers of Macaulay and which he would have been quick to ridicule and condemn in another.

He was conscious of the weakness indeed and resolved to combat it, as on going out to India when he writes that henceforward he purposes to read like "a man of the world." But presently he was again in fetters to the old passion.—

"I read insatiably; the Iliad and Odyssey, Virgil, Horace, Cæsar's Commentaries, Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, Don Quixote, Gibbon's Rome, Mill's India, all the seventy volumes of Voltaire, Sismondi's History of France and the seven thick folios of the Biographica Britannica. . . . As soon as I reach Calcutta I intend to read Herodotus again."

He did, faith, and had quite a little learned diversion besides.—

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"During the last thirteen months I have read Æschylus twice; Sophocles twice; Euripides once; Pindar twice; Callimachus; Apollonius Rhodius; Quintus Calaber; Theocritus twice; Herodotus; Thucydides; almost all Xenophon's works; almost all Plato; Aristotle's Politics, and a good deal of his Organon, besides dipping elsewhere in him; the whole of Plutarch's Lives; almost half of Lucian; two or three books of Athenæus; Plautus twice; Terence twice; Lucretius twice; Catullus; Tibullus; Propertius; Lucan; Statius; Silius Italicus; Livy; Velleius Paterculus; Sallust; Cæsar; and, lastly, Cicero."

A little later he mentions having turned over Valerius Maximus, Annæus Florus, Lucius Ampelius, and Aurelius Victor, besides having gone through Phædrus and being at the moment deep in Tacitus and Seutonius.

If such was Macaulay in the green leaf—he was at this time still under forty—some idea may be formed of him in the dry.

In 1838 he made a tour of the Continent, but that he was still the man of books on his holiday is quite evident from his Journal. On his birthday he "thought of Job, Swift, and Antony." At sight of the olive trees near Florence he thought of "the veneration in which the tree was held by the Athenians; of Lysias's speech; of the fine ode in the Edipus at Colonus; of Virgil and Lorenzo de' Medici. In Florence he notes that he was "up before eight

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and read Boiardo at breakfast." A few days later he picks up a little Mass-book, "and read for the first time in my life,—*strange and almost disgraceful as it may appear,* the service of the Mass from beginning to end." He didn't find the Latinity to his taste, and doubted whether even Claudian would have understood it. Surely the pedant ambitious to have read everything was never more effectively disclosed than in the words which I have put into italics.

But perhaps the most amusing instance of Macaulay's unconscious pedantry is yet to be cited. Upon leaving Florence, this entry occurs in his Journal:

"My journey lay over the field of Thrasymenus, and as soon as the sun rose I read Livy's description of the scene and *wished that I had brought Polybius too.* However, it mattered little, for I could see absolutely nothing."

This was not Byron's method in leading Childe Harold over the historic places of Europe. It is very likely that he had neither Livy nor Polybius with him (and rather doubtful if he could freely construe either) when, some twenty odd years before Macaulay's tour, he visited the field of Thrasymenus, and commemorated in one or two splendid stanzas the great battle between Roman and Carthaginian whose fury was such that under the feet of the combatants—

"An earthquake rolled unheededly away!"

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But then Byron was "ill-educated," in Macaulay's view (Leigh Hunt sneered that his reading was confined to Gibbon); and it is certain from the quality no less than the quantity of his performance, that he was no slave of the library and did not suffer books to come between him and life. When he did use them, it was as Aladdin commanded the service of the Slaves of the Lamp.

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XI

BYRON

MR. ANDREW LANG, not long before his death, traced for an American journal a survey and judgment of the literature of the Nineteenth age. Readable, and provocative, and entertaining surely it is, for the hand that wrote the "Letters to Dead Authors" had not lost its cunning, nor the charming literary style its wonted allurement. But the latest awards and strictures of Mr. Lang are not less to be challenged than those of yore—nay, they are the more to be combated, since age had brought to the charmer an unpleasing dogmatism. Mr. Lang did not, could not, persuade all of us when his humor was of its mellowest and the glamour of youth, that most potent aid to heresy, wrought in his favor its own illusion: shall he fare better now when the Jester, in spite of himself, takes on something of the bitter note of Ecclesiastes? . . .

In his latest disparagement of the greatest English poet of the last century, Mr. Lang is only harking back to his "old lunes." The modern school of English literary criticism has found in Byron its

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greatest stumbling block. Since the passing of Matthew Arnold, there has been perhaps no oracular voice in English literary criticism; but the voice of Andrew Lang, if not oracular, has at least been raised with persistency.

Now Matthew Arnold, exclusive as he was in his literary partialities, dealt more fairly with Byron than Mr. Lang. For, though Arnold's exigent culture and sense of form were revolted by the noble lord's crying sins against pure artistry, yet he appreciated justly the importance of Byron as a force in literature, crediting him (after Swinburne) with the "imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength"; and, with much enlightening criticism, he did not attempt to degrade the author of "Childe Harold" from his lofty rank. Indeed, Matthew Arnold reckoned Byron, as a literary power, next in order to Shakespeare and Milton—the established European verdict has long awarded him the *second* place.

Mr. Lang is not better founded in his classics or his prosody than was Matthew Arnold, but he is ambitious, at least, of seeming to have more courage than the latter, for he actually proposes to unhorse the "Childe" at this late day. So have we read that once

A falcon tow'ring in her pride o' place
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

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Yet the bold Andrew's courage is, after all, of a strongly marked Scotch variety—he will get some other reckless body to lead the way and take the first burden of cursing. And thus he does it:

" 'Byron,' says Mr. Saintsbury, (*sic*) 'seems to me a poet distinctly of the second class, and not even of the best kind of second, inasmuch as his greatness is derived chiefly from a sort of parody, a sort of imitation of the qualities of the first. His verse is to the greatest poetry what melodrama is to tragedy, what plaster is to marble, what pinchbeck is to gold.' "

Prof. Saintsbury is a respectable and laborious plodder who has written many volumes of criticism upon literature which might have been suffered to speak for itself—nay, which, in spite of Prof. Saintsbury, will continue to speak for itself. One of his critical achievements was to brand Dickens with the charge of vulgarity for daring to write a true history of England. Mr. Lang holds identical views as to Dickens. *Arcades ambo!*

Having thus pushed another before him into the breach, the canny Andrew finds heart to say:

"Such, however unpopular they may be, are my own candid sentiments, for though from childhood I could, and did, read all our great poets with pleasure, it was not with the kind of pleasure which Byron in his satire and his declamation could occasionally give me."

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Is not this a luminous confession? And how artful is the suggestion that *from childhood* the preternatural Andrew discriminated justly touching the poet about whom the rest of the world had gone wrong!

There can be no greater curse, in an artistic sense, than to be one part poet and three parts critic—the equation of Andrew Lang. How differently a real poet would have felt is made clear to us by the confession of Alfred Tennyson—a dreaming boy of fifteen, when the news came of Byron's death:

"I thought that everything was over and finished for everyone—that nothing else mattered! I remember I walked out alone and carved 'Byron is dead!' into the sandstone."

* * * * *

We shall agree with Mr. Lang that Byron is (often) monotonous, that he is rhetorical, that his versification is (sometimes) incredibly bad, and that he is (sometimes) "more obscure, mainly by dint of hurry, bad printing and bad grammar, than Mr. Browning." All of which is true—as true as that Shakespeare is often prolix, tiresome, obscure; that his clowns are not infrequently the most insufferable nuisances ever put upon the stage, raising a hyperbolic idea of the stupidity of the Elizabethan audiences; that scores of pages preserved from oblivion

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by his better work, are not of the slightest literary value.

But the blemishes upon Shakespeare do not blind us to his essential greatness (though they were too much for Voltaire), nor should the blemishes upon Byron have a like unhappy effect. Mr. Lang "can not understand the furore which was so much the child of his title, his beauty, his recklessness and his studiously cultivated air of mystery." To one who in short clothes was able to disparage Byron, the "furore" will, of course, present some difficulty; but for us who, far removed from the spell of that splendid personality, still give thanks for the genius that aided so powerfully in the spread of the new and liberal gospel of humanity which ushered in the Nineteenth age—for us the fact is intelligible enough, but of infinitely less significance than Byron's share in striking the keynote of the new time.

Byron's identification of himself with the world-spirit, so dreadfully in travail at the dawn of the last century, even more than his poetical achievement, determines his greatness. For men are more than metres and the prophet is greater than the poet. But even with regard to his poetical achievement, I do not believe that the Langs and the Saintsburys will ever be able to take a stone from that high column. There has been, for some time past, greater artifice in carving heads upon cherry stones, and a surprising

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degree of metrical skill, which none has better exemplified than Mr. Lang himself, in his fortunate poetical conceits. In the natural order the granite cutters are followed by the lapidaries and polishers; for there is much display of pretty gewgaws on the lower levels of Parnassus. But what poet since that evil day at Missolonghi,—

Sad Missolonghi, sorrowing yet
O'er him, the noblest star of fame
That e'er in life's young glory set,—

has given the world such verse as the stanzas on Waterloo, the Storm in the Alps, the awakening of Chillon's prisoner, the Bridge of Sighs, with Venice, "throned on her hundred isles," the Gladiator, "butchered to make a Roman holiday," the marmoreal apostrophe to the ocean, the "Isles of Greece"—nay, even the Wreck in "Don Juan"? Shall we rob poetry of its garland and memory of its richest treasures at the bidding of Andrew Lang?—

Did not Byron write in his "Vision of Judgment" the best satirical-burlesque poem in the language—so incomparably the best, in truth, that no English poet of mark has since ventured to enter that field? And what poem of the Nineteenth century has more value as a human document than "Don Juan"? What literary work, verse or prose, has done so much to clear the air of the social cant and hypocrisy

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which it has been the century's chief mission to get rid of, but of which a vast deal yet remains in the world? I take up my Taine—an excellent critic, Mr. Lang!—and I read:

"England was at the height of war with France and thought it was fighting for morals and liberty. In English eyes, at this time, church and constitution were holy things—beware how you touch them, if you would not become a public enemy! In this fit of national passion and Protestant severity, whosoever publicly avowed liberal ideas and manners seemed an incendiary and stirred up against himself the instincts of prosperity, the doctrines of moralists, the interests of politicians and the prejudices of the people. Byron chose this moment to praise Voltaire and Rousseau, to admire Napoleon, to avow himself a skeptic, to plead for nature and pleasure against cant and rule, to say that high English society, debauched and hypocritical, made phrases and killed men, to preserve their sinecures and rotten boroughs. As though political hatred were not enough, he contracted, in addition, literary animosities; attacked the whole body of critics; ran down the poets of the new school, declaring that the most celebrated of them were Claudians, men of the later empire."

Finally he stood at bay, with the whole British pack, forty-power parsons, politicians and poetasters in full cry after him.

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Dogs or men!—for I flatter you in saying
That ye are dogs—your betters far—ye may
Read or read not what I am now essaying
To show you what ye are in every way.

And thus he came to write his masterpiece, "Don Juan," an unequal work, artistically considered, yet the poet's most notable contribution to the gospel of human liberation. With all its faults, it stands unique in literature and only a genius of the first order could have produced it. "Never was seen in such a clear glass," says Taine, "the tumult of a great genius, the inner life of a genuine poet, always impassioned, inexhaustibly fertile and creative, in whom suddenly, successively, bloomed all human emotions and ideas—sad, lofty, low, hustling one another, mutually impeded, like swarms of insects, that go on humming and feeding on flowers in the mud. He has so much wit, so sudden, so biting, such a prodigality of knowledge, ideas, images, picked up from the four corners of the horizon, that we are captivated, transported beyond limits."

Mr. Lang would have us believe that the verselets of John Keats are of vastly more importance; and so he gives us the old patter about Byron's fame owing much to his rank, and good looks, and personal histrionics. Some *éclat* certainly came from these circumstances being conjoined to the possession of great genius; and that is all. At this late

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day, it is astonishing that a critic of Mr. Lang's pretensions should raise the puerile question. The truth is, that the iconoclasts who aim their feeble missiles against Byron are in the insane condition of those who attempt a work despaired of alike by gods and reasonable men. . . .

I shall not insult Mr. Lang, literary encyclopædia that he is, by asking him, ever so mildly, how it was that Lord Thurlow's rank failed to save him from utter damnation as a poetaster; nor shall I inquire where are the volumes of the Earl of Carlisle upon whom (though a relative) Byron fleshed his maiden satire. Mr. Lang well knows that not a single literary pretender, lacking Horace's "kindly vein of genius," was ever snatched from oblivion by a fortune or a title. The names of a few such are indeed recalled with the sort of odium attaching to the person who made an indecorous noise in the Roman Senate.

The eminent critic quoted above—who, although a Frenchman, has written the only readable history of English literature—has thus keenly and surely touched the spring of British prejudice against Lord Byron:

"He is so great and so English that from him alone we shall learn more truths of his country and of his age than from all the rest together. His ideas were banned during his life; it has been attempted to depreciate his genius since his death. To this day

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English critics are unjust to him. He fought all his life against the society from which he came; and, during his life, as after his death, he suffered the pain of the resentment which he provoked and the repugnance to which he gave rise."

* * * * *

On the eve of his last fateful journey to Greece, Byron said that he had taken poetry for lack of better; that it was not his fit work, and that if he lived ten years more the world should see something else from him than verses.

"What is a poet? What is he worth? What does he do? He is a babbler!"

And weary of his dreams, weary of the world's applause, sick of his unchallenged but impotent glory, he sought a change in heroical action and died, though with sword scarcely unsheathed, for Greece and freedom.

The great poet deceived himself. He had done his fit work in expressing the revolt of the spirit of his age against the prescriptions of caste and creed; in voicing its aspirations for the ideal of a just democracy. This also is the better part of his poetic fame. Well might he have said in the language of another great poet, his own spiritual heir and disciple:

"I do not know if I shall have merited the placing of a laurel wreath upon my bier. I have never laid

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much store in the glory of poetical fame, and whether my song be praised or blamed, it matters little to me. But lay a sword on my coffin-lid, for I have been a steadfast soldier in the war of the liberation of humanity!"

To Byron, as to Heine, humanity accords both the laurel and the sword.

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XII

A SUPER-TRAMP

W. H. DAVIES, a new and remarkable English poet, has written a book in prose which Bernard Shaw named for him, characteristically, "The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp." It is the story of many years of the poet's life bridging youth and manhood, which he passed mainly as a tramp and beggar both in England and in this country.

I hardly know of a book to compare with this; too sordid to be in any real sense charming; too true perhaps to be a work of art. Yet with all its defects, it may fairly be proposed as an example of the sober truth that not seldom in real life steals the ground from the best efforts of romance.

By his own account, the author had little regular schooling and for years, as he tells us, in a memorable phrase, Drink was his captain. Yet his book is a masterpiece in its way, plain, simple but enormously engaging; while in point of style it often reads like a modern echo of Swift or Bunyan. Mr. Shaw justly says in his clever preface: "Though it

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is only in verse that he (the author) writes exquisitely, yet this book, which is printed as it is written, without any academic corrections from the point of view of the Perfect Commercial Letter Writer, is worth reading by literary experts for its style alone." The familiar miracle (I may add) of the born literary man getting his equipment by hook or crook, to the confusion of those who cannot write even by dint of sounding university degrees.

I have but one serious fault to find with Mr. Davies, and it is the chief artistic shortcoming of an otherwise admirable piece of work: he rarely makes his tramps speak, as they act, to the life. A strained regard for the sensibilities of the polite reader (who is even more exigent with us than in England, as Mr. Zangwill complains) has doubtless led him into this error, and it is much to be regretted. But for this we should have in "Brum" (what a name that!) one of the masterpieces of vagrant literature. Even as it is, trimmed to the bark, that sagacious hobo bespeaks our interest and admiration beyond any character in the book. We part company with him much against our will and far too soon for the good of Mr. Davies' chronicle which, with Brum, was just offering that verisimilitude that touches both life and art. But let us be thankful for so much of him as we have—had he been "done" with conscious literary intent he might not have pleased us nearly so well.

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Brum's methods of begging, of panhandling (Mr. Davies does not seem to know the word), of working different towns, of beating his way, of holding down "soft" country jails in winter time and choosing easeful occupation or absolute idleness in summer, are all out of the ordinary and denote a real creation. Brum is no American Weary Wraggles taken from the comic supplements, but a shrewd English beggar done from the life, whose only defect, as already pointed out, is that the author has euphemized his dialect out of its natural tang and vigor. The account of how both beat their way to the hop country in Western New York is as interesting as anything in the book and offers a good specimen of the author's quietly effective style.

We jumped the bumpers, the engine whistled twice, toot! toot, and we felt ourselves slowly moving out of the yards. Brum was on one car and I was on the next facing him. Never shall I forget the horror of that ride. He had taken fast hold on the handle of his car, and I had done likewise with mine. We had been riding some fifteen minutes and the train was going at full speed when, to my horror, I saw Brum lurch forward and then pull himself straight and erect. Several times he did this, and I shouted to him. It was no use, for the man was drunk and fighting against the overpowering effects, and it was a mystery to me how he kept his hold. At last he became motionless for so long that I knew the next time he lurched forward his

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weight of body must break his hold, and he would fall under the wheels and be cut to pieces. I worked myself carefully toward him and woke him. Although I had great difficulty in waking him, he swore that he was not asleep. I had scarcely done this when a lantern was shown from the top of the car and a brakeman's voice hailed us. "Hello, where are you two going?" "To the hop fields," I answered. "Well," he sneered, "I guess you won't get to them on this train, so jump off, at once. Jump! d'ye hear?" he cried, using a great oath, as he saw that we were little inclined to obey. Brum was now wide awake. "If you don't jump at once!" shouted this irate brakeman, "you will be thrown off." "To jump," said Brum quietly, "will be sure death, and to be thrown off will mean no more." "Wait until I come back," cried the brakeman, "and we will see whether you ride this train or not."

"Now," said Brum, "when he returns we must be on top of the car, for he will probably bring with him a coupling pin to strike us off the bumpers." We quickly clambered on top, and in a few minutes could see a light approaching us, moving along the top of the cars. We were now lying flat, so that he might not see us until he stood on the same car. He was very near to us when we sprang to our feet and unexpectedly gripped him, one on each side, and before he could recover from his first astonishment. In all my life I have never seen so much fear on a human face. He must have seen our half-drunken condition, and at once gave up all hopes of mercy from such men, for he stood helpless, not knowing what to do. * * * "Now," said Brum to him, "what is it to be? Shall we ride this train without

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interference, or shall we have a wrestling bout up here, when the first fall must be our last? Speak!" . . . "Boys," said he, affecting a short laugh, "you have the drop on me; you can ride." We watched him making his way back to the caboose.

Again I say, what a pity that Mr. Davies did not suffer Brum to speak in his true dialect! That he could have done so who can doubt after this authentic utterance from a hater of the Lords and a fellow lodger with the author in a London doss-house: *"Smother them lazy rotters in the hupper 'ouse, the bleeding liars!"* . . .

However, it must in fairness be allowed that the restraint of this book is its peculiar virtue. Given the same story to tell, how an American writer,—almost any one of the magazine squad,—would have overloaded it with strenuous writing and all manner of exaggeration. Fortunately for our super-tramp, he has no literary bag-of-tricks to show us, but spins his yarn, plain or moving, with an extraordinary quietude; now and then casting a patient eye upon us to assure himself that we are listening. In this way he relates the fearful accident which drew him from tramping to literature (unexpectedly, Mr. Shaw comments, as it happened in real life)—an accident which thrills the reader with pity, yet he can but think has led to the increase of the world's stock of delight.

The same restraint—or shall we not say art?—

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is noticeable in the story of the strange ship's cattleman, small, smooth-faced, soft-voiced, cigarette-smoking and profane, whom an accident revealed to be a woman on the voyage to England. Perhaps there is nothing finer in the book than his (or her) unsuspecting bunkie's confession of the attraction which he felt so strongly without understanding it:

"In all my experience this was the first time I was not eager to sight land and fill myself with English ale." . . .

Of this book Mr. Shaw says that he read it through from beginning to end, and would have read more of it had there been more to read. That also was my experience, and will, I think, be the experience of most people who are capable of appreciating a book of uncommon truth to life. That the life was a tramp's life, told of with the frankest self-revelation—begging, stealing, loafing and drinking—does not lessen the value of Mr. Davies' work, and is indeed its chief title to consideration as a human document.

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XIII

LITERARY FOLK

TURNING over a catalogue illustrated with portraits of authors, the other day, I was painfully struck with the ordinariness of the lot, in point of good looks. This was especially true of the women authors, and the sad conclusion was forced upon me that the jealous Muses impart the smallest possible share of their own immortal beauty to the earthly daughters of the lyre. After all, there never was or will be a poem equal to a really pretty woman. I have known literary men who would grow languid even upon the subject of their own works, while the perennial theme of the woman made for love never failed to kindle in them fresh eloquence and inspiration.

Beauty is a woman's right, and we say what we do not believe when we talk of the superior charms of the female intelligence. Along in middle life it doubtless occurs for the first time to many men that women have minds as well as bodies, but during the period when Nature is most exigent, the matter gives them no concern.

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I believe no woman ever regretted that she was loved for her beautiful body rather than for her gifted mind. Of course, even a divinely pretty woman has no license to be a fool—and few are the men who will call her such. In fact, for women up to the fortieth year, beauty is an excellent substitute for every kind of mental accomplishment.

I once knew a woman who was clever enough to dispense with good looks, if ever a woman was. Yet she lamented her face constantly,—which indeed might have been a better one,—and often obtruded upon my notice her one claim to consideration in a physical way—a delicate and charming foot. Ah, touching vanity of women! This lady often remarked, with a conviction based upon her own feeling of deprivation, that George Eliot would have gladly bartered her literary genius for a good face. No doubt she would, at least before her grand climacteric, which she had surely passed before she married her third husband. Her French contemporary, George Sand, had a few more men as well as greater physical charm and a less factitious talent.

No: literary genius never consoled a woman for an ugly face, for to love and be loved is every woman's natural desire. George Eliot shows her spite in her own works and in true womanly fashion resents Stepdame Nature's unkindness to herself by giving a bad end to every character whom she has

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endowed with personal beauty. She hurries Maggie Tulliver and Tito Melema to their doom, not like a literary artist, but like an executioner. Be sure of this, ladies: "Romola" and "The Mill on the Floss" would each have had a different ending if the mother of Mary Ann Evans had not too seriously considered a horse's face at a certain critical time. . . .

The men in my catalogue can boast little advantage over the women, though their case is not so sad, since beauty is not expected of them. Yet a contemplation of this gallery of portraits does not induce cheerfulness. Such ravaged heads, such lamentable faces! "Picture me young and handsome as I once was," said Heine, "not like an emaciated Christ of Morales." I wish some of these authors would practise upon us a like agreeable deception.

It sometimes occurs that you form a favorable idea of an author's personality from his literary style. You go on happy in your illusion until one day a photograph in the literary press shocks you into a new attitude, generally of hostility and aversion. A good many men, as well as most women, will not read an author if they dislike his personality. Think of Byron's head and face which stamped him as a god, and remember how the world, like a woman, passionately lamented him. Call up now the weirdly contorted Cockney phiz of

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Kipling, and wonder no more that he is the best hated and most liberally cursed poet of our time.

As a rule, the tradition of personal beauty does not obtain in the *genus poetarum*. Nature dislikes to double her gifts. For one Byron or Goethe she makes many a blear-eyed Horace, many a deformed Scarron or grinning Voltaire. Of all the fictions of the poets the most flattering to themselves is that of the beautiful Apollo. Perhaps it was not so much a fiction before the incident of the flaying of Marsyas—after that the god seems to have visited his disfavor upon all his mortal competitors.

Not all, I would say, for now and then he makes an exception, and surely he has done so in the case of Edwin Markham. Here is a poet who looks the part—the deep eye that denotes prophetic power, the Jovian head, the godlike port, all bear the manifest seal of that character which was recognized as divine by the wise ancients until the ignoble race of publishers arose to degrade it.

I believe Edwin Markham to be a true poet—the highest voice in American letters to-day. I also regard him as a brave man, since he dares to live his poetry and *by* it—a feat not less difficult than to have written "The Man with the Hoe." Perhaps it is unfortunate that Mr. Markham should be so generally hailed as the laureate of the new socialism—I do not find it easy to imagine Apollo tuning his lyre to the praises of the trade unions. There are

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truer, finer things in his poetry than the philippics which he hurls at the frowning brow of Capital. His minor strains—tender little songs of his heart and home—to my mind better attest his poetical inspiration.

From this you are not to infer that I regard the Poet's clamant humanitarianism as a pose, or in any degree insincere. On the contrary, I have received from no other man so strong an impression of moral cleanliness and intellectual integrity. Would I had known him when he was younger—would I might see the poetical sins of his youth! This Poet was not always a priest. There must have been terrible storms of passion in that strong soul ere he came to us, chastened and exalted by the trial of years. But Edwin Markham, with rare discretion for a poet, will not suffer us to touch upon that page.

* * * * *

I have a heart full of sympathy for the Literary Woman—for which I well know I shall not receive her gratitude. She is so numerous and prolific (alas! chiefly of books), so brilliant and enviable, so panegyrized and paragraphed, in short, so eminently able to take care of herself, that my concern for her must needs appear impertinent.

Well, I shall go on pitying her, in spite of her resentment—pitying her for the brave fight and the futile effort and the success that is little worth;

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often, too, for the calm joys of maternity and domestic peace which a factitious ambition has shut out of her woman's life.

This latter is, I suspect, a sore point with Milady Literary—if she were ever to lose her angelic temper, it would be on account of this. In such a moment, how intense her loathing of bestial, philoprogenitive Man, grossly seeking to divert her from the passionless joys of literature! Curiously it chances that the desire of so many women to write is only another form of the maternal instinct. Travail the woman must—her woman's flesh requires these natural pains—but the pangs of literary conception are to many of the sex a sufficient and agreeable substitute. I know a literary woman who has had both experiences, and her now exclusive devotion to her Art (the capital is hers) tells the rest of the story.

Women enjoy writing for its own sake more than men do.

It was my pleasant fortune to meet a lady not long ago who came to ask my poor counsel with a view to having her MSS. published. She is not famous and yet not absolutely without reputation. I believe she has quite as much talent as the run of literary women. I should think her capable of writing a book that would make a good mediocre success—the sort of thing at which women always beat men. But the point I want to make about this

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person (and I think it applies generally to the *scribentes sorores*) refers to her astonishing looseness of faculty. In this I read alike the success and the failure of women in literature.

To most literary men the act of mental composition is painful; to some great writers it has been superlatively so. To most writing women I believe it is quite the reverse—nay, unconscionably agreeable and easy. Hence the close analogy between a writing woman's talk and her literary product; hence also the latter's facile agreeableness. Milady of the MSS. is here an excellent witness. To say nothing of her prose, which she throws off at will and in fearsome quantity, she exudes sonnets at every pore. I examined a bulky typewritten volume of these, some five hundred in number. There was no denying a certain poetic faculty and a dreadful poetic facility. The lady rhymed well and scanned with accuracy. Her mind was well furnished with the usual stock paraphernalia of the versifier. Everything was there you had a right to expect, so far as prosody goes and mere verbal mechanics; but of the heaven-born surprise and thrill and uplift of true poetry, not a pulse, not a breath, not a flutter!

And the burden of all this rhymed futility was love, super-passionate love, for the lady is not an *ingenue* (*sic*), and so, naturally revolting from the realism of the senses and the enforced contact of

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the conjugal relation, her passion (i. e., the passion of her verse) is frozen, though splendid—a cold, cold thing, fit for the nebulæ or the interstellar spaces.

The lady is fair, fat and perilously near forty. Her well-nourished person suggests images strongly at variance with the anæmic ardors of her verse.

"Surely you do not mean all this?" I hazarded.

She smirked and replied, "But why not? It is poetry!"

I felt there was nothing to be said, and, like Dante's lovers, we read no more that day. . . .

At another time I asked Milady of the Sonnets if it was not a terribly arduous task to have composed all this poetry. She smiled with a self-complacent disdain that might have abashed Melpomene herself.

"Not at all—I simply could not help it. To write poetry has been the one great joy of my life since—since——" She hesitated and did not finish the sentence. There was a moment's pause while Milady strove with her memories.

Resuming with an effort, she added: "Far from being a painful task, it has been a pleasure and a recreation. I have only to take up my pen, when it simply flows so that I can hardly write down the lines as fast as they come. And so perfect that I seldom change a word!"

I hope I am not without feeling for the pathos of

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this confession of the fruitful, though ineffective, poetess. She had wasted years that might have been more happily and usefully employed. She had (as I learned afterward) separated from her husband, whose chief offence was that he had failed to do becoming honor to her literary genius. Her vain hope had been buoyed up at long intervals by a perfunctory word of praise from some literary character upon whom she had forced her manuscripts. No publisher would bring out her work unless he were guaranteed against loss. This guaranty she was unable to furnish, and so the years of deferred hope and heartache and cankering envy that will ere long leave her a blighted, disappointed, miserable old woman.

Is it not sad, Mesdames? . . .

Finally, it must be granted that the public in general hates poetry whether by men or women, and the reason is patent enough. Poetry is a more artificial medium of expression than prose, and with the adjuncts of rhyme, etc., mediocrity more easily disguises itself therein. To write prose is to come out in the open; to write poetry is to take up an ambush: the public instinctively feels this and gives preference to the honester medium. The practice of poetry lends itself therefore to inferior literary talent of the imitative order,—in a word, to the peculiar talents of women; especially as verse is consecrated to the sentiment of love with which the sex is almost

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exclusively concerned. This facile art has its uses and delights, I do not deny. It diversifies agreeably the pages of the magazines and is a great convenience in the "make-up," as printers say—that is, in the filling of odd corners. It is mere repetition and iteration, of course, both of words and ideas, but even this is not without value in a time when the taste for original poetry is declining or almost extinct. And surely it furthers the literary spirit in our most remote outposts of culture to be able to boast of a "lady poet" who has had a poem in the magazines.

Few men of strong literary talent give themselves wholly to writing verse nowadays; mainly because the public hates it, with good reason, as I have shown. And so the *ars poetica,* or what there remains of it, is by general consent abandoned to the weaker sex. This is become so much the rule that one is apt to associate that rarity—a *man poet*—with marked feminine attributes; and thereanent hangs many a scandal.

There, ladies!—mayhap I have prosed too much, but my intent was kind. And when all is said, I would debar you from nothing that puts you in a pretty conceit with your charming selves: which is, it must be allowed, the chief merit of your poetry.

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XIV

PHILADELPHOS

DR. GEORGE M. GOULD is an eccentric person living in Philadelphia, who has made a tuppenny bid for fame by his theory of the influence of abnormal vision upon genius and character.

Dr. Gould has searched the entire field of literary biography for subjects to whom he might apply his theory, with results that have at least abundantly satisfied himself. A cockeyed poet rejoices the Doctor beyond measure, and a philosopher with a squint or a "bum lamp" (to use a technical expression), or a color-blind essayist, almost equally delights him. There is, of course, nothing abnormal in the Doctor's passion for abnormality in others.

Dr. Gould has lately emitted a book concerning Lafcadio Hearn, in which he exploits his theory with a flourish, on account of certain disabilities of that man of genius. Incidentally the Doctor makes a few motions to attract notice to himself.

The fact of Hearn's unique literary genius has no real interest for Gould, except as taken in con-

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junction with his myopia. This exhibits the precise mental calibre of our theorist, for Hearn's bad sight was mainly the result of an accident, whilst his literary genius was, of course, innate. No sane mind would admit that there was any relation between the two, but the extraordinary Gould would have us believe that Hearn's defective sight conditioned both his mind and his morals! And to bolster up his perverse theory, he does not scruple to revive old hideous accusations affecting the memory of the dead artist.

What makes Gould's conduct especially atrocious is the fact that Hearn at one time treated him as a friend and wrote to him a series of remarkable letters. This was during the earlier part of his career, before he had thoroughly found himself. He wrote no letters to Gould from Japan—perhaps that is why Gould accuses him of disloyalty to his friendships. Something very like hatred breathes in Dr. Gould's conclusion that Hearn could not be a creative writer, "because he felt himself excluded from so many of the inspiring experiences of life—the finer love of woman, the deeper phases of friendship, and in the physical world the manifold beauties of form—by his deformity and blindness."

Gould is absurd. Lafcadio Hearn fulfilled his artistic endowment with rare completeness and success, all things considered. He got the thing written that bothered him, and enough of it to make a

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fine literary monument. His accidental physical defects in no way conditioned his genius, though I believe they intensified it. Readers of Hearn do not need to be reminded that his observation of things in the physical world was as close and faithful as his perception of things spiritual was illuminating. If we knew nothing of the personal history of the man, we should certainly not derive from his writings that he had but one eye and that only half good, and that he was little more than a dwarf in stature. Lacking this knowledge of the physical man, even Dr. Gould would not know how to go to work on him with his famous theory.

In point of fact, Hearn's work is full of life and light and color—few men with two good eyes have seen half so much. He was most exquisitely sensitive to the slightest gradations of light and shade, to the beauty of flowers, of the landscape, of the sky. His natural descriptions are peculiarly his own, realized with the pains his disability obliged him to take. Indeed some of his pictures are, if anything, overcharged with color—he has confessed that his chief labor was to "tone things down." He delighted in color and by some principle of compensation got all he wanted of it. "Blue is the World-Soul," was not said by a joyless myopic.

I fancy Dr. Gould's mental vision has a bad case of strabismus, or, at least, is painfully short-sighted. Like other specialists of the Bedlam order, he seems

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himself infected with the malady which it is his business to diagnose. His book on Hearn does honor neither to his head nor his heart, and it is a far worse abuse of friendship than any ever brought home to the dead writer.

Gould denies that Hearn was in any sense a great man; and yet he fastens upon him, barnacle fashion. If he was not great, why write a book about him, and why especially lug in the fact—if fact it be—that he had once foolishly accepted the "hospitality" of George M. Gould?

In all my reading I have never met with an example of baseness, treachery, utter lack of the sentiment of honor,—the one thing that keeps us above the beast,—comparable to this display of the putrid sore which Gould carries about in lieu of a mind. He is speaking of Lafcadio Hearn, the poet and man of true genius:

"They who blame him too sharply for his disloyalty and ingratitude to old friends do not understand him psychologically. There was nothing behind the physical and neurologic machine to be loyal or disloyal. He had no mind, or character, to be possessed of loyalty or disloyalty."

The absurdity of Gould is only surpassed by his malice. He attacks the literary reputation of Hearn, and as a sample of his fitness for such an enterprise we have this:

"One does not ask originality or even great con-

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sistency of an echo, and, of all men that have ever lived, Hearn, mentally and spiritually, was most perfectly an echo. . . . He created or invented nothing; his stories were always told him by others."

O idiocy, thy name is Gould, and thou hast a cock-eyed theory of literary origins! Why, this charge which you bring against Hearn is true also of Shakespeare, who never invented a story—true also of Maupassant, the greatest *conteur* of all time. One need not invent, O ass ineffable!—the world is full of stories or the raw material of art; it is for the genius like Maupassant or Hearn to turn them into the finished product.

However, I will not deny that the application of the Ocular Theory may have been made in good faith—Gould was committed to that foolishness even before Lafcadio Hearn outgrew and forgot him. . . .

It was Baudelaire who characterized Griswold's posthumous attack on Poe as an "immortal infamy." M. De Smet, likewise a French critic, applies this damnatory phrase to the Gould lampoon on Lafcadio Hearn. He calls it *bizarre et odieux,* and declares it to have failed of its purpose, for as he keenly remarks:

"In this very pamphlet, in spite of all his hateful insinuations, his efforts to ridicule the excessive nervousness, the weaknesses, even the physical infirmities of the man, or to rouse opinion against the boldness

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of his thought, Gould is despite himself dazzled by the brilliancy of his intended victim. His book is full of exasperated and reluctant homage to Hearn, the more singular that it has no real critical value, but which proves at least that the bitterest enemies of our author ignorantly felt and perforce acknowledged his greatness." M. De Smet affirms his conviction that to every intelligent and unprejudiced mind Hearn will seem precisely the opposite of what Gould wished to see in him.

If, outside the vulgar crowd, there are readers to approve this malignant performance of Dr. Gould, the French critic would ask, where does America stand in the scale of civilization? It is certain, he affirms, that in Europe Dr. Gould's book would be ridiculously impossible.

The furore, both of eulogy and disparagement, which arose not long after the death of Hearn in 1904, has scarcely yet died away. In the noble simile of the Roman poet, we tread here on ashes that are still burning. The passions aroused by that bitter controversy are still active, though a truce has been called to their expression in the public press. The witnesses of hate and the witnesses of love have both been heard: turn we now to the impartial arbitrament of those who neither love nor hate. For that, as in the case of every contested reputation, we shall have to await the deliberate process of time.

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But, according to a famous dictum, foreign judgment of a writer settles the question as to posterity. If this be so, Lafcadio Hearn is already assured of his place in the Pantheon of Letters. I have long since expressed my faith that his place therein will be a high one, and I am confirmed in it by M. De Smet's judicious appreciation. At the very outset of his work he declares that few writers will be so fully known to posterity, and he speaks of Hearn as "a man whose singular destiny was one of the most painful and significant of our time"; whilst he thus notes his artistic achievement:

"Lafcadio Hearn's literary fame, undisputed in America, was in England established solidly enough (at the time of his death) for one to consider it as definitely acquired. In fact, it was of the purest kind: awarded by the suffrage of an *élite*, it had nothing of that inferior popularity, entirely of circumstance, which belongs to Conan Doyle. If one examines the character and the quality of the appreciations which Hearn's books have evoked, he will recognize by indisputable signs that they are of a species only elicited by works of the first order." And he adds: "In studying the man we shall find that he was of those artists avoided by false fame (*la réclame*). His entrance into the literary pantheon was made quietly and in a manner wholly natural. He found himself one fine day consecrated as a great, a very great writer, without anybody

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being disturbed about it." . . . Evidently M. De Smet attaches little importance to the *émeute* raised in this country by the question of Hearn's literary merits, as well as that of his moral character. This no doubt owing to that peculiar advantage of view-point which the foreign observer in these matters shares with posterity.

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XV

A POET OF THE REVOLUTION

SOME months ago there came to me from a London publisher a little book of a hundred-odd pages, bound in paper covers, that has troubled me far more than anything in prose or verse which I have read this many a day. I say "troubled" advisedly, for that is the warrant, the seal and the sign of a true message. And the books that so affect us even unto pain, that trouble us deeply, making a spiritual or emotional impress beyond the ordinary, compelling us to heed them as a living insistent voice, are in a small class by themselves. Such books are always of a plangent personal note and usually have to do with elements of a personal pathos and tragedy,—the inextinguishable cry of some Weak One but glorious, who has gone down fighting to defeat and death. But these untoward accidents named death and defeat in the world's reckoning are not, in the rare instances noted, the true and ultimate end of the matter. Was it not the Greatest of the Weak Ones who said that

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no man should ever again be the same after hearing His name? . . .

This little book, "Songs of the Army of the Night," has indeed moved me so much that I am reluctant to write of it. Too sad is it, too lamentable in its hopelessness, surcharged with unavailing effort and suffering and sorrow, like the untimely ended life of the Poet himself. In truth the book—the story—is too terribly real for literature. It is or should be exempt from formal canon and criticism. The man was too angry to write always according to the stated rules of art—it is a supreme sanction of his sincerity that we ourselves make the excuse for him. I scarcely know a writer to whom we so readily pardon defects of a formal kind because of the redeeming and transfiguring purpose behind the work. No praise, I think, would have pleased him half so much.

Francis Adams had need to hurry with his task, for he was to die at scant thirty-one, and he had always the prescience of early death, like a cold hand at his heart, to stifle his inspiration. While there was yet light he urged brain and heart to the highest pitch, the passion of the man consuming him like a palpable flame. "This is what I pray," he tells us,—

This is what I pray
In this horrible day,

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In this terrible night,
I may still have light,
Such as I have had,
That I go not mad.

This is what I seek—
I may keep me meek
Till mine eyes behold,
Till my lips have told
All this Hellish Crime—
Then it's sleeping time!

Born and bred in the dominant class (as he tells us), liberally educated, master of the culture of Greece and Rome, with the scholar's instinctive revolt from the vulgar, the violent and the terrible, Francis Adams chose to make himself the Poet and Prophet of the disinherited. It was a strange election, this modest, cultured, refined young man turning from Greek odes and Latin quantities to preach the despised cause of the poor and to become the Tyrtæus of the English proletariat. About the time that he was thus preparing to throw his life away, another young man with a very different order of ideals was getting his first taste of the noisiest, most fiercely contested and most remarkable literary fame of our generation. Could there be a more striking and ironically suggestive contrast than that which the

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success of Rudyard Kipling offers to the failure of Francis Adams? A contrast the force of which is not broken by the disparity of literary genius between these two writers. For Adams, it must be kept in mind, died at thirty, just as he was finding himself after many passionate and too hasty tentatives. To judge him by his best, one would be tempted to set high the bound of his possible achievement. I believe that the difference between him and Kipling was rather ethical than literary, in the last analysis.

For example: Everybody knows what Kipling has done for Tommy Atkins, and reflective persons shrewdly estimate how much Tommy Atkins has in turn done for Kipling. Nobody will dispute that Kipling's clever and calculated glorification of the British soldier has been a large element—if not the largest—in his great popularity and success. Well, Adams was nearer to Tommy Atkins by birth and associations than Kipling himself. He was born at Malta, the son of a British army surgeon whose regiment was then stationed there. With what different eyes he looked on Tommy Atkins, and the work cut out for that "absent-minded beggar," may be guessed from one of the most spirited of his poems, "England in Egypt," which I dare pronounce to be not unworthy of the hand that gave us "Danny Deever." Here is a bit of this noble poem:

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And the silent Arabs crowded, half-defiant, half-dismayed,
And the jaunty fifers fifing flung their challenge to the breeze,
And the drummers kneed their drums up as the reckless drumsticks played,
And the Tommies all came trooping, tripping, slouching at their ease.
Ah Christ, the love I bore them for their brave hearts and strong hands—
Ah, Christ, the hate that smote me for their stupid dull conceits—
I know not which was greater, as I watched their conquering bands
In the dusty jaded sunlight of the sullen Cairo streets.

And my dream of love and hate
Surged, and broke, and gathered there,
As I heard the fifes and drums,
As I heard the fifes and drums,
The fifes and drums of England
Thrilling all the alien air!—
And "Tommy, Tommy, Tommy,"
I heard the wild fifes cry,
"Will you never know the England
For which men, not fools, should die?"

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And "Tommy, Tommy, Tommy,"
I heard the fierce drums roar,
"Will you always be a cut-throat
And a slave forevermore?"

Adams's "Songs of the Street," of London town, with its daunting grandeurs of wealth and appalling contrasts of poverty, with the tragedy of its submerged and hopeless thousands,—Poems of the Pit they might well be called,—are to my mind his best work and that by which he deserves to live. Among these I would cite especially "One Among So Many," the finest and tenderest of these pieces, which is as beautiful as De Quincey's prose idyl of the London prostitute and as surely immortal. There is another poem of the same genre, "In the Edgware Road," which is quite as admirable for different reasons. I doubt if a more scathing and poignant satire upon that social infamy and injustice which delivers countless women to ruin has ever been contrived within so brief a space. These are the concluding verses:

Will you not buy? She asks you, my lord, you
Who know the points desirable in such.
She does not say that she is perfect. True,
She's not too pleasant to the sight or touch:
But then—neither are you!

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My lord, she will admit, and need not frame
Excuses for herself, that she's not chaste.
First a young lover had her; then she came
From one man's to another's arms, with haste:
Your mother did the same.

Moreover, since she's married, once or twice
She's sold herself for certain things at night.
To sell one's body for the highest price
Of social ease and power, all girls think right:
Your sister did it thrice.

What, you'll not buy? You'll curse at her instead?—
Her children are alone, at home, quite near.
These winter streets, so gay at night, 'tis said,
Have 'ticed the wanton out. *She could not hear*
Her children cry for bread!

I have said that Adams is often too angry to write with the patience and reserve that Art requires for its best effects. Many of these pieces seem to have been struck out at a white heat—the glow, the rage, the fire are still palpable in them. They are as plenary and perfect as a curse. They say little and yet leave nothing unsaid. This, for example:

Where is poor Jesus gone?
He sits with Dives now,
And his dogs flesh their teeth
On Lazarus below.

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Where is poor Jesus gone?
The poor Samaritan,
What does he there alone?
He stabs the wounded man!

Where is poor Jesus gone?
The Lamb they sacrificed?—
They've made God of his carrion
And labeled it "Christ"!

There was no shilly-shally, no dilution, no temporizing about Adams's radicalism. This cultivated Englishman, scion of the stiff-necked race which has given Law and Order to more than half the world, is the most thorough-going red and rebel known to me. He glories in the "execution" of Lord Leitrim, the now nearly forgotten Irish landlord and lecher, and composes a Byronic epitaph for him. He rejoices over and applauds the Phœnix Park affair in which

An Irish Ruffian met his doom,
And an English Gentleman!

He addresses a sonnet to Parnell in which he speaks of—

The wrong that is as one with England's name,
Tyranny with cant of liberty, and shame
With boast of righteousness.

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He arraigns Tennyson in a brilliant parody of "Locksley Hall" for his treason to the revolutionary faith of his youth; scores Ruskin for his uppish indifference to and philistine contempt of the poor; celebrates Karl Marx in a splendid sonnet, and flagellates Swinburne for his attitude toward Irish nationalism.

He attacks British rule in India, in Egypt and in Ireland, not least of all in England itself. He denounces the British system of Property and Civilization and hopes to see it overthrown. Like our own Jack London, he proclaims himself "for the Revolution," and this is the most fortunate of his moods in a literary way. And always he is in earnest, terribly in earnest.

But the jauntiest, boldest and most artistic of these songs of revolt, with something in the lilt and sway of it that recalls Heine, is the poem labeled "In Trafalgar Square." Nothing that Adams has left us better certifies his flame-hearted sincerity as a worker for the Revolution or his potentiality as an artist and poet to whose full fruition and development only time was lacking. The terse strength, bravery and challenge of this lyric of revolution are scarcely surpassed by anything of Kipling's.

The stars shone faint through the smoky blue;
The church bells were ringing;

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Three girls, arms laced, were passing through,
  Tramping and singing.
Their heads were bare: their short skirts swung
  As they went along;
Their scarf-covered breasts heaved up, as they sung
  Their defiant Song.

It was not too clean, their feminine lay,
  But it thrilled me quite
With its challenge to taskmaster villainous day
  And infamous night;

With its threat to the robber Rich, the Proud,
  The respectable Free.
And I laughed and shouted to them aloud,
  And they shouted to me!

"Girls, that's the shout, the shout we shall utter
  When, with rifles and spades,
We stand, with the old Red Flag aflutter,
  On the barricades!"

The writer of these clarion verses cannot be said to have failed of high and peculiar distinction as a poet; we may be sure that, with many others from the same hand, they will not perish ere the rising of the Sun of Justice for the Army of the Night, the disinherited toilers of the world whom Francis Adams loved with so perfect a devotion and to whom he gave in his life too brief the best fruits

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of his heart and brain. He has given us no word more inspiring than the epitaph he wrote for himself:

Bury me with clenched hands
And eyes open wide,
For in storm and struggle I lived,
And in struggle and storm I died.

Of the merits of that rare and wonderful sacrifice, to which at this moment I can think of no equal recent parallel, I have not spoken at all; nor is there need that I should. Nor, finally, shall we who have long to struggle in the darkness with what conscience and courage we may, attempt to judge this brave soldier of the truth, who has gone forward into the Light!

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BOOK THE FOURTH

(TO THE LADY OF MILL VALLEY)

ADVENTURES O' THE SPIRIT

FROM a sunken Syrian tomb long antedating the Christian era Ernest Renan wiped away the dust and found inscribed thereon the single word—"Courage!"

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I

THE ENDLESS WAR

I WAS born in chains and have been breaking fetters all my life. Fetters of fear, fetters of superstition, fetters of hereditary hatred and prejudice, all the spiritual gyves that are prepared for most of us ere we are bidden into this world. A slave I came from my mother's womb, and I am not yet free. Not a link have I snapped in my struggle for liberty but the ghosts of the Past have risen up to reproach me. I being but human am often tired of the contest; they, immortal, ever renew it with a passion and a vigor to which weariness is unknown. Before I was, this battle went on in the souls of those from whom I inherit; but they died and made no sign, though bequeathing the duel to me. Ah, but the struggle is long and the end is ever in doubt. What the Day gains the Night reconquers. No matter—the word is still to fight on!

Often the ghosts assail me with arguments, and well they know how to seek out the weakness of my soul: "Canst thou be happier or wiser than so many

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generations of thy blood? Why dost thou strive to cast off the bonds which they endured patiently unto righteousness? In sundering these, thou dost break also with them and art become an apostate from all thy foregathered kin. Have a care!—the burden of thy treason shall lie heavy on thy heart."

In faith it does now, and my reason is not always ready to make answer to this accusing Voice of the Chains. I should be more at ease, no doubt—for liberty is not happiness—could I elect to silence the voice by giving over my reason and going whithersoever the ghosts would lead me. But I will not buy my peace at such a price—I will not be false to the rule of mind which I have chosen for guide in my pilgrimage. Ye shall not write me among the sinners against light! . . .

Yet I had been happier had I never thought of my bonds. Many I know that wear these chains lightly, as not wearing them at all; and others cover them with the flowers of duty and devotion, and sweet Christian humility—still the chains are there! For the Past is a terrible enslaver and these fetters were forged in a time so remote that it need fear no witnesses. Yes, the Past enslaves and the dead oppress us more than the living. With men in the flesh like ourselves, we can do battle—nay, we can even feel a joy in the fierce grip and encounter. But there is less satisfaction in this business of fighting ghosts, those warriors of the Past

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who seek to make the Present and the Future their own. Here we touch the power of the Unknown and the Unknowable with which men conjure to-day as potently as ever in the past—the ghosts ever prompting and abetting.

For in truth the history of the past two hundred years has been largely a battle with the ghosts. Not a few times were they routed and dispersed, but always they reformed their shadowy battalions and came back again to the issue. Vainly did we spend our best strength upon them—often we did but wound and exhaust ourselves, while the goblins mocked our useless efforts. Oh, we did not come off wholly without victory, nor, ghosts though they be, did they go quite unscathed. And though it is just that we reproach ourselves with having too often shown them an ill-judged mercy, we *did* wrest from them some cruel privileges which shall never be theirs again. We *did* strike some blows that were felt, hard as it is to wound them, and of this we were assured by the grimaces of their holy representatives.

And if they now again attack us with fresh vigor and in numbers undiminished, we too have enlisted for the endless war. Still shall we rear our standard against this tyranny of the grave, this oppression of humanity by the chimera of the Unknown, this vampyre Past that sucks out the life and hope and joy of the Present. Still shall we do battle with

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the ghosts of man-made myth and superstition that so long have held the human soul in a dominion of terror. Boldly and vigilantly shall we dispute them when they seek to rob us of the safe landmarks of reason, that they may have power to drag us back unto the darkness of the Past. Nor shall we be the less on our guard when they come, as is now their wont, with flags of truce, with honeyed compliments, with fraternal embraces, nay, even with an excellent mimicry of the very speech of Liberty—it is the endless war!

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II

HELL IS DEAD

IT is said that the greatest revolutions accomplish themselves silently. A striking illustration of this is seen in the abolition of the theologic Hell which has taken place in our day. It has been attended by no religious wars, or civic bloodshed, or St. Bartholomews, or burnings at the stake, or inquisitorial tortures. Not even a papal Bull has been launched to save the monstrous chimera which was so long deemed a supreme article of religious faith. The oldest of Christian churches well knows that Hell is dying a natural death—knows, too, that no ancient mummery or conjuration will avail to keep it alive. As the king's touch can no longer cure the king's evil, so the hand of the Church has lost the power of reluming the bale-fires of Hell. I do not believe that the Church is very much concerned because, after a duel of many ages, it knows now that it can not contend against the spirit of humanity. Therefore, it has learned to accept defeat with a good grace and even to turn defeat into a kind of triumph by consenting to that which it knows to

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be inevitable. For this is the wisdom of the serpent, and it is this which we now see in the attitude of the Church toward the general abandonment of the dogma of an eternal Hell.

So the greatest of all evils raised by the human imagination is at last perishing under the sentence of men, its ancient fires blackening and smoldering in the light of the risen sun of humanity. But do not go too near, for it is not dead yet, and a spiteful flame, the spirt of some old theologic malice, might leap out and destroy you! I think indeed that it will bear watching for a long time yet. The monster is perhaps only scotched, not killed; and that Terror is still so fresh, so fresh and awful! that we cannot yet regard it as laid forever. Let the bravest of us keep watch and ward over the monster that it come not back into full life again; for Hell is so cunning and—think of it—it has lived nineteen hundred years! . . .

The Hell of theology was a nightmare creation of human fear and hate, seasoned with the perfectly human qualities of malignity and vindictiveness and malice, which we are, quite without warrant, in the habit of ascribing to the Devil. We know now that the Devil had no claw or hoof in it, and that this frightful Hell, which the world received during many ages in the name of Infinite Love, was solely and purely the work of men. This we now see clearly by examining the dreadful legend which still

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persists, though its lurid characters are fast fading out and its dominion over the souls of men broken forever.

Yes, Hell is gone forever! The power of Darkness is dissolved. The sun of Love is fully arisen. The stone is rolled back from the sepulchre in which the human spirit has been shut up during weary centuries. The most terrible of all despotisms is shattered in the dust. The greatest of all deliverances is achieved. Hell is dead! Proclaim jubilee to all the world! Shall we not sing and laugh and dance over the death of the great enemy of our race? Has it not filled the world long enough with tears and terror, and shall we not make merry over the hideous monster's death, as our best tribute to the many generations that wept and mourned in the shadow of Hell?

It is a fact that the human race has only just escaped from Hell! The liberation has been wrought in our day, yet so silently that the world has scarcely perceived it. But the future historian will write: "Humanity descended into Hell in the first century and ascended unto Heaven in the twentieth." Nineteen hundred years in Hell!—was it not long enough, O God of mercy and justice! . . .

This, then, is the true spiritual emancipation of the human race, and happy are we who have been privileged to see it. Think of the countless martyrs who died by fire and axe, who perished in loath-

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some dungeons or broke their hearts in exile, for only daring to dream of this glad Era of Liberty which now is ours! Alas! in their suffering and misery, their torture and abandonment, their utter cutting off from all human succor and their consignment to the reprobation of the damned,—how they must have thirsted for a sight of the Ideal City, the true Kingdom of God, where we, more fortunate pilgrims, have at length arrived! Sainted martyrs of humanity, yours was the sad and bitter sowing; ours is the happy harvest. Blest be your honored names, encircled with fire and pain—and thrice blest the nameless ones who died, unknown and unmarked, in the same holy cause! Not in vain did you steel your souls to meet the fire, the torture, the supreme bitterness of death. Rejoice from the Heaven of the just whence you lean to acclaim a victory that is all your own: the light that you foresaw is at last risen upon the world; the spirit of Hate is dethroned among men; the Gates of Hell shall no longer prevail against mankind!

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III

SAVING THE "SCHEME"

SOME time ago I wrote that there can be no truce between the human spirit and the kind of religion which rules by fear and thrives by superstition—which threatens terribly from the Unknown, menacing the race with Eternal penalties, —the same old proposition that has oppressed the heart of humanity like a nightmare since it became part of the Gospel of Good Tidings. And I ventured further:

You say that Hell is not preached any more? But it is the very keystone of the arch of theology! This holy science was founded upon the assumption of the total depravity of God, as made manifest in the dogma of Hell. Take away that dogma, remove that stone, and you pull down in ruins the house of orthodox, theologic Christianity. The Christian church would not dare repudiate that dogma. It has ruled mankind by its proud claim to hold the keys of Heaven and Hell, and it has persuaded with the latter when all other arguments have failed. To let go of Hell were to forfeit the

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half of its dominion; in a theologic sense Hell is dearer to the church than Heaven, for men might, conceivably, be so happy in this world as to care little for a hypothetic Paradise. But never, never could they be indifferent to the threat of an everlasting Hell!

Now comes the news that Rev. George Tyrell, a brilliant Jesuit writer, has been obliged to withdraw from the order on account of his lately developed heretical views on Hell and eternal punishment. His case is very similar to that of St. George Mivart, who, as a sincere Catholic, long made a desperate effort to keep his theology and science from mixing, but failed at last and was excommunicated by a cardinal without scientific scruples.

St. George Mivart was kicked to death spiritually by the Ass of Balaam of Beor, concerning Whom he held some doubts. (The respectful relative pronoun is here meant for the Ass.) A large part of his offending also was that he offered the heretical opinion that the Divine Mercy would one day open the gates of Hell. Monstrous!

It is evident that St. George Mivart was too sentimental for a scientist and not hard enough for a theologian.

The Church said, "Out with him!"

Now behold the spectacle of another man who loves the Old Faith as St. George Mivart loved it,

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but who would clear it of its horrors and give it forth anew as a Gospel of Infinite Love.

What! a Priest of the Jesuits to utter such abominations! Infamous!

The Church says, "Out with him!"

Tender Christian consciences will rejoice that the gates of Hell still prevail against mercy and humanity—that the frightful dogma of Eternal Hate remains untouched in the Charter of Salvation. . . .

Speaking of Tyrell and the Modernist agitation in Roman Catholic circles, I wonder if these names suggest any definite idea or association to, say, one person in a hundred thousand:

F. Cardinal De Asculo,
G. Cardinal Bentivolus,
F. Cardinal De Cremona,
Fr. Cardinal Onuphrii,
B. Cardinal Gypsius,
F. Cardinal Verospius,
M. Cardinal Ginethus.

Probably not; yet they are the names of the Cardinals of the Most Holy Roman Inquisition who condemned Galileo for teaching "that the Earth is not the center of the World, nor immovable, but moves even with a diurnal motion."

Galileo, to escape severe punishment and perhaps to save his life—only fifteen years before Giordano

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Bruno had been burned alive for less significant heresy in the Forum at Rome—was forced to abjure this proposition, declared by Their Eminences to be "absurd, false in philosophy, and, considered theologically, an error in Faith." The sentence reads:

"But that your grievous and pernicious error and transgression may not remain altogether unpunished, and that you may hereafter be more cautious, serving as an example to others, that they may abstain from the like offences, we decree, that the book of the Dialogue of Galileo be prohibited by public edict, and we condemn yourself to the prison of this Holy Office, to a time to be limited by our discretion; and we enjoin under the title of salutary penitence that during three years to come you recite once a week the Seven Penitential Psalms, reserving to ourselves the power of moderating, changing, or taking away entirely, or in part, the aforesaid penalties and penitences."

It has been persistently asserted that Galileo was put to the torture ere he yielded and recanted, but this has not been proven. He did not talk about it himself—discretion was a highly useful quality in those days.

Galileo took his medicine—he was seventy years old at the time of his trial—and thereafter kept his Modernism to himself. He died a faithful Catholic —with perhaps one reservation.

The name of Galileo is now a star in the eternal

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sky of fame, while Their Eminences, his judges, are clean forgotten of the world and *their* names known only to the Spirit of Irony.

The story is not so old but the Modernists may extract some comfort from it.

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IV.

RENAN'S LETTERS

THERE is a story, improbable enough to be true, that on the news of Ernest Renan's death Pope Leo XIII asked eagerly, "Did he repent?" Being told that Renan had died unreconciled to the faith, the Pope said with much feeling, "Ah! I am glad—then he *was* sincere!"

Whether true or false, this little story (which does no violence to the memory of the gentle Leo) will take its place with the canonized anecdotes of great men that live on forever, the most of which have been shown to be inventions, and the rest impossible: no matter—the world believes what it wishes to believe.

I have been reminded of it in turning over the large volume of Renan's "Letters from the Holy Land," recently brought out by an American publisher. The title, by the way, is a misnomer, and it seems to have been devised for the benefit of that section of the public which knows Renan solely from his "Life of Jesus." This is at least a good pub-

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lisher's reason for the label selected, but it will not satisfy the reader of nice conscience when he finds that only a small proportion of the letters are "from the Holy Land," and these by no means the most valuable or interesting. In fact, the best of the letters, from a literary and æsthetic point of view, are those written from Italy, while the personal interest is even stronger as regards certain of the letters penned in France—these latter addressed both to M. Berthelot and the writer's sister, Henriette Renan. There is not, however, a single letter in the whole collection which will seem without value or interest to admirers of the greatest liberal writer and scholar of the nineteenth century.

Still, you will not get even in the best of these letters more than a hint now and then of the Renan of literature, of the "Life of Jesus," of the "Recollections of My Youth," and a score of masterpieces besides. And in many of these letters you will notice a singular economy of expression, as if the writer were holding himself back and did not care to say his full mind.

This was precisely Renan's attitude toward letter-writing in general, as he has told us in the "Recollections." He there says that he could not conceive of a writer's expressing himself well, to and for one person: he himself could not write except for the public, and he fears that his correspondence, if published, will disgrace him. This confes-

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sion explains, as Renan meant that it should, the atonic and colorless note of his letters in general. But the true lovers of his work have no reason to complain, for he put into literature what he withheld from the few who shared every hope of his heart. Humanly the man suffers by this, but the writer gains. Had Renan done a work less great in literature, in philology, in scientific criticism, one might perhaps be disposed to challenge his overwhelming conception of the importance of his work, which finally became the sole god of his idolatry. But his achievement answers for all.

To go back to the motive of this article: the letter which reminded me of the remark attributed to Pope Leo on the death of Renan is that addressed to M. Berthelot, bearing date July 20, 1892. It was the last letter penned by Renan and was indeed written under the very shadow of death. Few things he has done better reveal the quality of his spirit than this letter, whose serene philosophy and undaunted courage must be prized as not the least part of that testament of good which the great liberal bequeathed to the world. I quote a part of this memorable farewell, in which we hear the last brave accents of Renan:

"How well for us, dear friend, that we fixed our philosophy of life when we were gay and strong! It would be rather late now to consider these grave subjects, threatened as we are with the end. For

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myself, I have established my ideas in this regard by continual meditation, and the subject has no new aspects for me. To end is nothing: I have almost filled in the framework of my life, and although I could make good use of a few years, I am ready to go. What is cruel is the havoc one causes in dear lives. The struggle will come after me. Let come what will—I shall utilize the remnant of life that is left to me. I am at this moment correcting the proofs of the fourth and fifth volumes of 'Israel.' I would like to revise the whole thing. If another does this, I shall be very impatient in the depths of Purgatory. Outside of the Eternal and myself, no one has any idea of the changes I would have cared to make. God's will be done! *In utrumque paratus.*" . . .

The fear of a mental and physical decay which would perhaps cause him at the last to recant his liberal faith, long haunted Renan, and in his "Recollections" he took pains to repudiate any such possible compromise or backsliding on his part. His besetting horror seemed to be lest any incident connected with his death should contribute to the "literature of edification," as has been made to appear in the case of Voltaire and others. The care was needless. Death found Ernest Renan at his greatest: unbroken, unsubdued, without dishonor or capitulation. Not repenting and undoing the work of

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his life, but rejoicing that it had been given unto him to do. Rejoicing also that it would go on without him and regretting only the inevitable summons of nature which called him from his beloved and unfinished task. The end of no life in our time has so keenly accentuated the Great Perhaps, as may be seen in the anecdote here given. Think what you will of Renan's tremendous hazard, but forget not that he chose this motto for his tombstone: *Veritatem dilexi*—"I have loved the truth!"

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V

TOLSTOY

THE man who may be said to have most effectively challenged the consciences of men of our day,—that is to say, for the past twenty-five years,—was not the Pope of Rome, nor the Archbishop of Canterbury, nor the Procurator of the Holy Russian Synod, nor the Grand Llama of Tibet, nor the Great Mufti of Stamboul. It was Leo Tolstoy.

The Pope of Rome is a kind and saintly old man, after the mediæval pattern, but he has had much to do in reforming the music and suppressing the tendency toward Modernism in his Church; and these are strictly matters of domestic concern. Besides, he has many political anxieties, and, being a sovereign, something of the policy of kings is enjoined upon him. The Pope cannot speak except as Pope—there is the difficulty. The Archbishop of Canterbury is very nearly a theological abstraction, so far as the world at large is concerned; and the rest have their own affairs to attend to. Remained only Leo Tolstoy to proclaim the "Father's business."

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This he did in a manner so compelling as to arrest the attention and trouble the hearts of men throughout the world. Greater than Peter the Hermit, he preached the Crusade of Peace, boldly taking his texts from that true Christianity which priests in their cowardice and complaisance have ignored from the beginning. No layman has ever gained so wide a hearing. And no churchman has ever urged the divine lessons of the Gospel with such clamant force as this man Tolstoy who did not believe that Christ was God!

I admit that, speaking only for himself, he enjoyed a certain advantage over the great religious functionaries mentioned above. The Pope of Rome could not voice a crusade against war, because he is himself a sovereign, and it is the habit of his brother sovereigns to make war from time to time. To be sure, the Pope does not approve of war, but for political reasons he could not go to the lengths Tolstoy has gone in denouncing it. Neither could the Pope advocate the pure Gospel idea of equality among men, with the renunciation of all titles and badges of superiority (as Tolstoy also has done), for that were to work "folly in Israel," since the Roman Catholic Church is in form a kingdom and its organization thoroughly aristocratic, being modeled upon that of the Kingdom of Heaven. So the Church is logically bound to defend and promote

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the aristocratic idea, and to me at least that seems to be no small share of its business in the world.

Now, the Archbishop of Canterbury is in even a worse position than the Pope to dispute the unquestioned moral primacy of Tolstoy. For the Archbishop of Canterbury is, in a sense, the Pope of England, and England is the chief war-making power in the world. Therefore, his Grace of Canterbury is barred from denouncing the greatest evil that afflicts humanity, and he doubtless makes truce with his conscience by reflecting that, after all, Tommy Atkins clears the way for the British evangelist.

Even more is my Lord tabooed from sharing or giving voice to the leveling, socialistic notions of Tolstoy. It is true these are derived strictly from the plain letter of the Gospel; but the English Church, like the parent Church of Rome, is content to draw inspiration and authority from within itself. Besides, Church and State are united in England, and society is rigorously organized on the aristocratic basis. I need not pursue this analogy with the Procurator and the Grand Llama and the Great Mufti—it is clear enough why they are silent in the matter.

But Tolstoy? There was nothing to withhold him from speaking his full mind, and it was to words like these that men listened with an attention which no other living teacher could command:

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"All over Russia, from the palace to the remotest village, the pastors of churches, calling themselves Christians, appeal to that God who has enjoined love to one's enemies—to the God of Love Himself! —to help the work of the devil to further the slaughter of men. . . . Christian pastors continue to invite men to the greatest of crimes, continue to commit sacrilege, praying God to help the work of war. . . . Japanese theologians and religious teachers do not remain behind the Europeans in the technique of religious deceit and sacrilege, but distort the great Buddhistic teaching by not only permitting but justifying that murder which Buddha forbade. . . . It is as if there never had existed the Christian and Buddhistic teaching about the unity of the human spirit, the brotherhood of men, love, compassion, the sacredness of human life."

Tolstoy has made war upon much that the polite world calls art and has run foul of the professional critics whose traditions he has riddled and the honesty of whose practice he has called in question. In return the critics, while praising his imaginative work, affect to hold his religious, esthetic and humanitarian ideas in small esteem. Referring to his book, "What Is Art?"—which has excited so much discussion in Europe, though it is but little known in this country—Emile Faguet of the French Academy writes:

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"It is a failure and often truly childish. The same may be said of all the *intellectual* books of Tolstoy. As a creator, as a romancer, as an epic poet, Tolstoy is one of the four or five greatest geniuses of our age. As a thinker he is one of the feeblest minds in Europe."

Yet Tolstoy's so-called heresies as to art, which have procured for him the disesteem of M. Faguet and his critical brethren, are only another expression of the great man's love for humanity. He rejects the fashionable, *i. e.*, accepted theory of art, because it has to do with the art of a class, an art that is foreign to the sympathies of the mass of men. Whatever the critics may say, this is the pure Tolstoyan gospel, and it is this gospel, rather than the novels of his youth and middle age, which has given Tolstoy his universal fame.

His lasting fame, too, I think. It is strange how the critics, blind and perverse in their generation as always, refuse to see that it was the burning love of humanity in Tolstoy,—a love which even in his old age constantly urged him to fresh efforts,—that made him a grand and solitary figure in the world of our day.

Thus it chances that since the voice of Voltaire rang out at Ferney, crying a halt to despotism and bigotry, no man has been able to challenge the conscience of Europe as Leo Tolstoy has done. The moral authority of this man, which sprang from his

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righteous anger and earnestness, was tremendous. It was far greater than that of the Holy Russian Church which sought to extinguish and silence him, for the Holy Russian Church rules its mindless millions while Tolstoy appealed to intelligence in every land. The present amiable Pope pottering with the Georgian chant, or opposing the Mediæval past to the Modern present, the Archbishop of Canterbury fiddling with questions of the ritual, the Procurator of the Holy Synod offering vain prayers for the Russian cause, had surely little in common with this Old Man Terrible who clutched the world by the throat and made it hear!

And most wonderful of all, though rejecting the divinity of Christ, Tolstoy's word has probably done more than any other personal influence in our day to drive men to the study of the Gospel.

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VI

HOLY MOTHER

"YOU are doubtless aware, Sir, that Mrs. Eddy is now living almost wholly in the psychic?" . . .

At these words, spoken in a mild explanatory tone and as if conveying the purest matter-of-fact, I looked up to meet a friendly glance from the keen-eyed, clerical gentleman beside me.

To while away an hour on the railroad I had been turning over the leaves of a magazine article on the founder of Christian Science—as one must, I suppose, now call Mrs. Eddy. It was one of a current series, certifying to much painful industry in the way of hunting up old parish records and baptismal registers, bringing to light old photographs, revamping ancient and half-forgotten gossip, etc., but without a trace of genial art (which failure may possibly be due to the nature of the subject), and marked throughout by a sufficiently candid but carefully indicated depreciation of the strange woman whose history is therein set forth.

I had been lost in wonder at the sordid begin-

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nings of what is now a great, rich and powerful sect, to which the world uncaps as always to wealth and power, if not to greatness without these attributes. I had been marveling at the strange life story, repellant for the most part, of the woman who is regarded as Divine by thousands of believers, her extreme age itself—she is nearly ninety—being accepted as a warrant of supernatural exemption. Who without means or education, friends or followers to speak of, established a "College of Metaphysics" and was herself the chief teacher therein (though Heaven or Calvin Frye alone knows where she got her metaphysics, and neither will tell). Who without warrant or ordination save her own, she being then almost an old woman, set her hand to the founding of a sect, the Church of Christian Science, which she has lived to see go far beyond, in zeal, in the high character of its membership, in all things that make for success and influence and prestige, not a few rivals that have existed since the sixteenth century. Who without learning or literary ability somehow contrived to write a book of sufficient crude power and inspiration to be accepted as a depository of Sacred Truth by thousands of intelligent people, and whose claim to the substantial authorship of this Christian Science Testament has been seriously discredited neither by the efforts of acute critics (including the foremost living writer *

*Mark Twain.

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in America), nor by the charges, open or veiled, of her several literary assistants, nor, greatest marvel of all, by her own proven incompetency. Who in spite of her great age—she is many years older than the Pope—still rules her vast communion with perfect poise and undiminished authority, crushing out disloyalty as it develops, overcoming heresies as they arise from time to time, and foiling all the efforts of her adversaries, whether within or without the fold, with a prescience, a sagacity and a resolution that well-nigh justify the superstitious reverence of her followers.

Here, I mused, is a story so marvelous, yet so simple and so potently wrought of the material of human interest, that even this prejudging and depreciating magazine writer could not wholly spoil it. What a proof of the power of the Mystical and the Unknown to sway the human mind! Here, after centuries of Christianity, after Popes and Reformations, Canons and Councils, Acts and autos-da-fé, schisms and synods galore, when the Christian Creed is thought to be outworn and seems to be all but explicitly disavowed by a skeptical generation,—here, in this very moment of the failing of the fires, comes a daring, illiterate, tremendously endowed woman to extract a new potency from the old religion and, it may be, to give it a fresh lease upon the hearts of mankind. A miracle in an age that investigates and scoffs at miracles! A religious founder in a time

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that is smugly tolerant but not vitally conscious of religion! But at this point the clerical-looking gentleman cut in upon my revery. . . .

"I can't say that I have closely considered the matter," I said, with a view to being both neighborly and non-committal at the same time.

"Well, Sir, I have," said the gentleman, with a pervasive warmth of conviction. "And, I repeat, she is, unquestionably,—yes, I dare even say *demonstrably,* living in the psychic.

"Many Christian Scientists, as you are doubtless informed, take higher ground and assert that Mother Eddy is now living in the spiritual—in point of fact, they maintain that she has been living in the spiritual a long time."

I looked the perplexity which these words induced.

"Pardon me. You are not perhaps a believer in Christian Science?"

"I am not an adherent of it, as a sect," I amended. "But I am without prejudice toward it," I added quite candidly, and as not wishing to be outdone in courtesy.

The clerical gentleman bowed. "I should then explain that those who take an extreme hieratic view of Mrs. Eddy—and they are the bulk of the Christian Science communion—hold the belief, which I in common with many moderate adherents do not share,—that she is now living absolutely in the spir-

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itual; that is, in spite of the conditions of mortal life which she fulfills and by which she is surrounded, *living already with God in a real sense!* A similar notion, you will remember, was entertained regarding the late Pope Leo XIII, induced by his extreme age and piety and the almost transparent envelope in which his spirit was confined. We moderate Christian Scientists maintain, on the contrary, that Mother Eddy is living almost wholly in the psychic: as truly and materially of the earth as ever and, notwithstanding, wrapt in a state of psychic consciousness which is no doubt the last remaining veil now left between her and Immortal Life."

"Really, the distinction does not seem so great," I ventured to suggest.

"Ah, but it is, Sir," the gentleman said more warmly than before. But here our train pulled into the station at Hoboken and we were torn asunder by the crowd madly bent on different ferries. My unknown friend had the presence of mind to fling me a card on which I read,—"H. Hetherington Botts, C. S.," with some further particulars that I need not disclose. Also he left with me the reflection that a faith without heresies would not be recognized in this world any more than Christ's seamless garment; and that Mother Eddy, with the wisdom that ranks her whilst still in the flesh with the divinities that rule the world, will not make the mistake of leaving a too perfect unity behind her.

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'As for the marvel of her continued power and existence, I have this to say: that if she were merely a feebly animated mummy or death's head, or, as her "next friends" aver, a senile idiot cunningly trained and tended by Calvin Frye and mysteriously secluded with a view to creating a superstitious reverence in her followers, I should not the less give thanks for the lesson of her life and work; and especially for the revealing light it throws upon much that is obscure in the history of religion.

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VII

MEDIÆVALISM

MEDIÆVALISM looks grotesque and foolish as a masque of mummies with painted dead faces, in that syllabus of vulgarity, the modern newspaper. This draught of cold air is fatal to its hothouse debility, so carefully tended, primped and petted through so many ages. This vulgar *exposé* makes mock of that august dignity, that tremendous tradition by which alone Mediævalism can maintain sufferance or respect. 'Twas a mad idea to have in the reporter, that pestilent marplot, that arch-agent of skepticism and irreverence. Let their Holinesses look to it! Turn the fellow out neck and heels, if ye would save what remains.

Poor old Mediævalism! How unwise to make this exhibition of itself in the crude and all-penetrating light of the twentieth century! *Vanitas vanitatum!*—even the old are not exempt from human weakness, and there is no wisdom without a mixture of folly. Poor old Mediævalism!—it *would* put on its bedizened robes of antique fashion, its furbelows, and flounces and all the trappings wherewith

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it was wont to carry awe even unto kings, and rouge its poor old wrinkled face, and call for its best crutches, and then, with a brave show of dignitaries and thurifers and acolytes and train-bearers, go forth into the light of day! Never, never was its Illustrious Sanctity guilty of such madness before, and Heaven alone knows what will come of it!

For of a truth the Dominion of Clothes is at an end, and there is not a rag left in the wardrobe of the Middle Ages by which the lease may be renewed. All the bandboxes have been opened and rummaged, boxes filled with the costly offerings of a world's piety and fear during a thousand years. Purple and scarlet and velvet and lace, copes and chasubles sewn with pearls, dalmaticas alight with diamonds, jeweled crozier, Peter's ring,—all the old paraphernalia have been tried on, to no purpose. The play, as a play, is still the finest in the world, but there is one fatal objection to it—it is woefully out of date and a spectacle for yawning even unto the faithful. It has had the longest run of which there is any human record, but its period approaches; the mystery and awe and wonder have largely evaporated—and the journalist is here to destroy the last shred of illusion!

Doubt not, your Holinesses, that such is his function, and see to it that he come in no more! Let Mediævalism have a care how it seeks to make truce with that child of the Devil, the Modern Spirit.

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Retro Satanas!—this Journalism is an obsequious, time-serving varlet, a duteous knee-crooking knave, if you please, but one before whom all kings and pontiffs and potentates lack reverence. Those peacock processions,—scarlet Cardinals, purple Bishops, violet Monsignori, sable Jesuits,—with all the pomp of a sacrosanct Vanity Fair, and all the splendor of the most gorgeous priesthood in the world; those genuflections and obeisances and prostrations, those kissings of hand and foot and all that mock abasement in which Pride gravely curtsies to Humility; those magnificent ceremonies derived from an age when the Pope was King of kings and the mightiest Monarch was humbled before him; that ancient ritual of words, words, words, in a dead tongue, with a tired Old Man nodding under ostrich plumes; and all the wonderful dramatic spectacle associated with immemorial faith, veneration and authority,—how vain and pitiful it all seems in the merciless vulgar spectrum of the daily newspaper! How utterly foreign to, and incompatible with, that universal intelligence, ever freshening and recreating the human thought which we call the Modern Spirit! Like a long-vanished world restored by some incredible conjuration, which is yet the more surely dead for the appearance of life it is made to bear.

A simile at which Rome the Eternal can afford to smile, perhaps, with her linked chain of centuries

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behind her, the keys of Heaven and Hell in her hand still transcending all earthly sovereignty, the millions of her fold more numerous and the limits of her spiritual dominion more widely extended than ever before. Has she not made good her losses of the past? To whom else shall the world in future turn for assurance and unity, for that Principle of Authority which alone can be relied upon to hold the menacing millions in check, who begin to interrogate more and more the claims of all principalities and powers? . . .

Be it so if so it be: the credit, in any event, is not due to any Salian pageant at Rome, but to the Eternal Christ who walks all ways of the world pursuing His mission. And, to repeat, if Mediævalism be wise, it will either burn its books of magic, like Prospero, or show the journalist to the door. For, if age have not too grievously addled its brains, it should remember that its worst troubles in the past were due to this same Devil and this same Black Art of printing! . . . Nay, of a truth I do not believe that the world will ever take a second course of Mediævalism.

That some pious and excellent people would like it I make no question. In the matter of keeping the common herd under foot or at heel, believing what their masters wished them to believe and rejecting aught else as a damnable heresy, the Middle Ages certainly outshine any other period of re-

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corded history. No wonder then that all who hate or fear the people look back to those far distant times with regret and seek to revive their vanished spells and lifeless mummeries. No wonder that a waning ecclesiasticism, recreant to the simple faith of the Founder, hopes to refurbish its purple and mayhap sharpen its fasces by the borrowed light of that long-quenched mediæval sun. No wonder that there is an unwonted stir of life among all the creeping, slow and venomous creatures that ever strive to hinder the advance of the race. . . .

But it is a false dawn that those mediævalists think they see, a phosphorescence as of death, a flickering sheen as of Golgotha, the place of skulls. Spare your prayers and incantations, Messieurs;—they are quite useless. For, worthy men and philosophers though you be, there is one trivial circumstance which you have not learned to take into account. Shall I tell you what it is? . . .

Time never goes backward!

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VIII

ASHES TO ASHES

IT was a grave writer (no pun intended), one Ecclesiastes, who said that the thing which has been is that which shall be, for verily there is nothing new under the sun. Hence I salute a passing institution—the Grave as We Know It: and a returning one—the Crematorium of the past.

The grave as we know it,—what is it but a whited sepulcher full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness, often a place from which the Dead reach forth unseen hands to drag down the Living? Not all the funereal frippery ever devised or devisable by the Undertakers' Trust,—the costliest "casket" of cedar or mahogany, upholstered with satin wherein one cannot get the backache; the gold or silver handles thereof, by which we mutely testify to the worth of the deceased; and those various et ceteras that eke out a Mortuary Bill which somewhat qualifies our grief when all is safely over,—shall make it other than a Horror and an Abomination. Oh that you might collect the later and competent opinion of the Party of the First Part in the resurrection

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choker and the skeleton dress suit (invented by some "mortician" of genius). You would then realize that the Abomination is the greater and the Horror the grislier and more unmitigated in proportion to the costliness of the layout!

Can anything more terrible be imagined than Nature's duel with the poor mortality enclosed by a foolish vanity in a *metallic coffin?* Pity Dives pickled and thus put away under his proud Mausoleum, condemned by his riches to such an inferno for his senseless clay, and envy poor Lazarus his niche in the Potter's Field and the paltry pine box which soon releases him by the merciful process of Nature to a new life in worm and insect, in grass and flower. There is but one imaginable horror worse than the state of Dives—to waken from a trance and find oneself in a patent hinge-sunk, hermetically sealed coffin, made originally perhaps for the assurance of widows.

Far be it from me to make light of any person's feelings or sensibilities. I know that my subject is full of peril; that the Grave as an Institution is not to be trifled with; that to advocate a different method from the immemorial and Holy Horror is like attacking the Scheme of Salvation; and that he who does so is sure to incur the Anathema of every theologian and undertaker in the land. Nevertheless, if the court pleases, I should prefer not to be a Skull! The humor of this Yorick business never

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appealed to me, though we are supposed to hold our sides at the Elizabethan clownery. I should not care to be knocked about the sconce by some old gaffer sexton, grimy and foul with handling the relics of mortality. Yet to this favor must we all come at last, as the Bard jocosely reminds us (plague on his humor!—he that put his own bones under a sulphurous taboo). Or—as I once saw in an abandoned cemetery of poor Irish dead—to have my bones nuzzled over by the rooting swine. Faugh upon such indecency! Give me the clean consuming fire.

Pagan! you cry. But the pagans (who, saving your courtesy, were our remote forefathers) did several things better than we, and this was one of them. They did not fear death as ye do, in spite of our Christian hope, for they destroyed death at once and kept only a handful of ashes,—a mere symbol, but sufficient, of the life that had been. They did not coddle death and make it a monstrous Vanity, and trick it up in a ghastly Parody of life, and lay it out in a metallic coffin that should cheat the necessary process of Nature and long preserve the horror of physical corruption. Their cities, towns and villages were not threatened with cemeteries on all sides, filled with slow-decaying dead, many of them keeping for years a terrible similitude of life. They did not, by their unnatural disposition of the dead, create belief in Ghosts and Vampires, thus

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producing a whole literature of terror and filling the world with fear. No; the pagans were wiser than we, and even more humane in their paganism. For to their good servant Fire, the cleanser and remover, they gave the worn-out husk of the body, and were not disturbed by the thought of any unsightly vestige of it remaining. A handful of ashes for the urn or columbarium—was not this a better and seemlier thing than a slow-rotting corpse in a grave? They had a poor notion of the Hereafter, perhaps, but they never cursed the living present with such a Nightmare conception as the *danse macabre*—that crowning horror of Christian necrology.

Yes, cremation will come, though the ancient profitable Pact of parson and undertaker forbids, and will hold a long time yet, Reason and Humanity to the contrary notwithstanding. For the vested property interest in the Grave as we Know It is even wider and deeper than we are apt to think. Nay, Death and Life are here in a strange partnership, and to rescue the dead from the Grave of Pollution is to take their living from many people,—or so we shall be told. It is the old cry of the enraged silversmiths and idol-sellers—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

I refer, of course, to the several Mortuary Industries, under the implied patronage of the Church:—the manufacturers of coffins (various), of the metal-

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lic horrors, of the gold, silver (sterling or oxidized) and aluminum bar handles, of silver coffin plates, etc.; as well as the mortuary tailors, the engravers, dealers in undertakers' supplies, etc., not leaving out the deep concern of the livery interest. Here is an army in opposition that will not be swept away in a day, and here of a truth are many who feed upon the living in the name of the dead. I do not care to make you weep or I might glance at the sacrifices that the decent poor are called upon to make in deference to a pompous and barren conventionality:—these are often of a nature to trouble the dead in their resting graves. For many a poor man who had lived frugally is, out of regard to the neighbors, buried beyond his means!

Most formidable of all is the opposition of the Church itself, which holds to a literal resurrection of the flesh and has all manner of dogmatic and practical reasons for disliking the ancient pagan practice of cremation or incineration. Certainly we touch here a sentiment consecrated by countless generations and worthy of all respect. But the supreme consideration and that which must prevail finally in settling the question is this:—*the earth is for the living, not the dead!* Not even their selfish veneration for the Family Plot (with its tidy arrangements for the Great Awakening) will blind men permanently to the wicked impiety of building a Paradise for the dead and near by (as in many a city) a

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Hell for the living! Sooner or later, the wise Church may not deny, all graves and cemeteries, be they the guarded Mausoleums of Kings, are abandoned and life resumes what death so long occupied.

They say the lion and the lizard keep
The courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahram, that great hunter—the wild ass
Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep.

Cremation approves itself by a hundred reasons of sanity, economy, public health, cleanliness, decency and humanity. It is more and more in use, while the foolish prejudice against it weakens daily: in the next generation this will have largely died out. The Grave as We Know It is doomed, and to those objecting religious reasons for its preservation let this answer be made: If there shall be a resurrection of the body, why should anyone lose his part in it for having gone the way of fire?—is not our God a God of power?

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IX

THE NEW CHRIST

CHRISTMAS makes us all of one religion. It gives us the Christ in whom all or nearly all of us believe—the Christ to whom more or less consciously we are in the habit of referring our good impulses; the Christ that stands for so many of us in the place of conscience.

To be sure, this is not the Christ of the fierce old theology, the Christ of Calvinism and reprobation and all that lurid concept of religion which so long oppressed the world like a nightmare. Not the Christ of the Inquisition in whose name the *san benito* was prepared and the fires of death kindled for those who dared to doubt the unknowable. Not the Christ of Laud or Cranmer, nor the Christ of the Scottish Councils, whose sweet emblems were the stake, the boot, the thumb-screws and the rack. Not the Christ who cast a sword into the world, asserting it as his peculiar privilege to set brother against brother through many centuries of blood and strife. Not the Christ of a Redemption conditioned upon the damnableness of humanity,—the Creator's own handiwork!—and which the human reason is asked to take on trust as a "mystery."

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Not the Christ of ages of delirium and hallucination —the Christ of trances, dreams and ecstasies—the Christ of a whole vanished world of mummery and madness.

With these several Christs that have made such woeful history the better part of the world is well done—thank God that we may now add, done forever! The pulpits know it, even though they will not confess the whole truth—but the pews give their silent testimony. Infallibility knows it and with unerring wisdom preaches the new Christ of peace, and mercy, and humanity, whom it was so long convenient to forget. The punitive Christ who sought to avenge his sufferings upon mankind has given place to the Christ of love and joy. Note it well, for this is the greatest change which our time has seen or shall see.

The old cruel theology is dead, sure enough, even with that ancient and venerable Church whose proud boast has always been that, sustained by Divine guidance and authority, she has never surrendered a line of her tenet or dogma. And if not dead formally and by express repudiation,—which would be too much to ask of the Infallible Church,—it is not the less dead in the hearts of the priests and the worshippers. There is no Promethean heat that can relume these cold ashes. . . .

All this is due to the advance of the human spirit. Theology is dead, but the new Christ lives and be-

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longs to humanity rather than to the churches. In other words, the human spirit, which lives by and for the Ideal, has extracted from the legend of its greatest Martyr such elements as are necessary for its future progress. The rest it leaves in the hands of the priests. But, strange to say, the priests who so long jealously claimed the whole legend, guarding it with fire and sword, and surrounding it with both earthly and infernal penalties,—the priests themselves are not half content with the old Christ, and, but for the pride of caste, they would surely renounce him. Especially as there is less and less profit in upholding a system of man-made theology which abolishes the human reason, and is justified only by a Scheme of Redemption that impeaches the Source of all wisdom and all justice.

Kindness is the one thing that will redeem the world, and it never was a conspicuous feature of the old theology. Let it once be seen and demonstrated what the spirit of human kindness can do in this world, and we shall not be greatly concerned as to the awards of the next. No doubt it is for this very reason that the more enlightened part of the human race has been so long afflicted with a religion of misery—the churches naturally would not discount their own promissory notes upon Heaven.

I will not say that the religion whose cry in the hour of its might was "Compel them to enter in!" was a curse in the world, for even in its worst

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periods it consoled, as well as persecuted, the just and the faithful. But I must rejoice to see the age-long duel near an end and the human spirit achieving a bloodless victory at last. Not the least fruit of this victory will be the vindication of human nature and the restoration of its honor and dignity. More and more will this be seen when the degrading idea of a Heaven to be purchased by fawning and wheedling and all manner of spiritual abasement shall have passed away.

Kindness is the word for the Christmas of the new spirit—for the world has outgrown that species of Christianity which, in the words of Swift, made people hate instead of love one another. Not the selfish kindness which regards only a narrow circle, but the true Christian kindness which goes out to the poor and the stranger, and which is boundless as charity itself.

Let us, every one, contribute to make of Christmas a grand festival of love and humanity; forgiving without hypocritical reservation those who have wronged or injured us, if they persist not in evil; succoring the afflicted, helping the needy, turning away from no office or duty that can add to the measure of human happiness. So shall we give the lie to that old conception of a fallen and all but irredeemable humanity; so shall we signalize the advent of the new Christ, with the onward and upward march of the human spirit!

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X

TRIPOLI

Anno Christi 1912

FOR days a white-clad figure had dogged the Italian army of invasion, without challenging special notice. There were friendly Arabs unmolested at all times, and it may well have been confounded with them. At a first glance there was nothing to distinguish it from the run of these, but, looked at more attentively, one divined behind veil and burnoose a presence of strange majesty. The face, nobly modeled, was lighter in hue than such as are exposed to the African sun. About the brow and head there was a peculiar tenderness and majesty that seemed to call up the idea of centuries of adoration. But, above all, the eyes of this strange man drew the gaze of the onlooker—eyes of dark and wonderful brilliancy, filled now with the light of unspeakable pity and sorrow.

Who was this Unknown, whence came he, and what business had he there amid slaughter and rapine, desolation and death? He seemed not to hold speech with any man, and the soldiers, intent upon

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their hellish trade, were all unmindful of his presence.

They had enough to do without heeding him, and one felt that it was only their blind, unseeing rage which exempted him from the bloody fate of so many. It was plain that they did not see him, else the spectacle of this Unknown sorrowing and wringing his hands over their awful deeds would have challenged a swift vengeance.

At night he wandered about the beleaguered city, going from one outpost to another, heedless of the sentinel's call. Often he was fired at, mistaken for an Arab spy, and the soldier, running forward to claim his quarry, found—nothing! Soon a rumor spread of a mysterious, white-clad Figure that menaced the camps of the invader. Many soldiers declared that they had heard it wailing and lamenting in a strange tongue—a tongue that was spoken by none in Tripoli. The Arabs whispered among themselves that it was a prophet from the desert sent to proclaim a Holy War of God's people against the Italian dogs. And they dissembled their satisfaction in their beards—their long glossy beards, well kept with savory unguents, which the accursed Giaour, they well knew, would not hesitate to tear aside with rude hands, in order to cut their throats. There were still others who averred that the strange Visitant portended the coming of the Plague; and of a truth the Plague did come, seizing with spectral

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hands and dragging down to death many of those who had come to do murder in the land.

Still the White Figure flitted about the city and the camp, unheeded by day but a source of indescribable fear and menace by night. Passing strange and terrible were the sights It looked upon and over which It raised imprecating hands.

It saw Lust and Murder loosed against a trembling, helpless population of old and young, the sick and the unfit, poor derelicts in the path of War.

It saw scattered heaps of such dead as these lying in a terrible confusion and clinging one to another in the grim security of death; here the tiny corpse of a child, with terror stamped on its innocent face, there a white-haired old man with one arm flung protectingly around a young girl in whose staring eyes might be read the horror of her fate.

It saw innocence brutally violated and the life then torn from the outraged body.

It saw little children slaughtered and their bodies tossed alongside their murdered parents.

It looked upon that most awful and accusing sight under heaven—the hearth-fire quenched in blood and mute forms of death where joyous life had lately been.

It saw blood shed in torrents solely from wantonness and the useless cruelty of War.

It saw the cowardly give themselves courage by murdering the defenceless.

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It saw men wearing the uniform of Christ refuse the common cares of humanity to the perishing victims of savagery and greed—people who had done no wrong save to dwell in the land where they were born. It saw this, mindful of the words—*"A cup of water given in My name!"*

It beheld infamies which the most hardened soldier will not confess to his kind.

It saw every imaginable horror which in so-called Civilized War effaces the kinship of humanity and turns man into a fiend.

* * * * *

If it was indeed thou, O Christ, that didst look upon these horrors done in thy name, tell us of what avail is thy Gospel of Peace since, with priestly warrant, men continue to wrest from it a sanction for their crimes.

We have been very patient and have still believed in Thee, even though Thou didst not return to us, according to thy word pledged to the first generation.

Teach us, dear Christ, how we may henceforth cleanse ourselves from such blood-guiltiness as Thou didst shuddering look upon in Tripoli.

Rebuke the nations miscalled Christian that pretend to honor thy Cross, yet armed to the teeth watch each other like sleepless enemies, ready to destroy each other, even in thy name!

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Unsay once and forever those terrible words which have stained thy Evangel with blood down the long lapse of centuries—*"I came not to send peace but a sword!"*

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XI

DE PROFUNDIS

INDEED, Madame, they who accuse me of impiety have but little skill in reading the heart. They are also very ignorant of ethnology or the science of races, and they certainly lack acquaintance with the charming works of M. Ernest Renan. Else they would know that it is quite impossible to imagine a Celt without religion—as easily fancy a living man without blood! Hence La Vendée; hence Ireland; hence much lamentable and glorious history.

"You must not laugh at us Celts," said our great kinsman Renan. "We shall never build a Parthenon, for we have not the marble. But ours is the lore of Macbeth's witches. We bury our hands deep in the entrails of a man and withdraw them full of the secrets of infinity!"

To the true Celt the supernatural offers no difficulty,—nay, it is his *natural!* To him is given in its fulness what Renan names, in true Celtic idiom, the vision of the invisible world. He is the eternal druid collecting oracles from tree and cloud and

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stream; from whispering wind and eddying pool; seeing a whole mystic, pregnant world where to the ungifted sense there is nothing. He prefers a miracle to a fact—a dream to a demonstration—a vision to a scientific exegesis. Hence his inviolable attachment to the Christian Faith: he loves it because of its mysteries; because of his "invincible need of illusion."

The three-leaved shamrock is for him to-day, as it was for the rude chieftains who gathered about Patrick on Tara's hill, a sufficient explanation of the Trinity. Here was a nation of "babes and sucklings" made to the hand of the Apostle. What wonder that the Irish have always deemed themselves the Chosen People of the New Dispensation? For the vein of skepticism is rarely found in the blood of the Celt—he may doubt the real but never the unreal. And you never find him clamoring for a "rationalized religion." He accepts all or nothing.

Need I say, Madame, to you whom I could not deceive even were such my wish, that my heart is wholly Celtic and always a traitor to my head—alas! how came I by this changeling head that has made me so much trouble? . . . Yes, in this heart of mine the entire spiritual drama of my race is constantly enacting. Though I confess myself a skeptic and a sinner, dear Lady, I am not the less obliged to keep company with the believers and the saints. For they pass through my heart in

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endless procession, like figures in some quaint old Missal, these vanished generations of my race and my blood; praying, weeping, rejoicing, sorrowing; sinning, repenting, expiating; now exultant with the facile joy of the Celt, and now abandoned to his no less facile despair; now accusing themselves with wild imprecations, and anon bowing heads meekly with pale hands folded on breasts worthy to receive their Lord; crying comfort and courage one to another as they point the rugged way toward a mighty Crucifix on high, the summit of their endeavor; and often, alas, calling to me. Ah, my Lady, that is hardest of all to bear,—those voices of the dead that warn and entreat, those hands of the dead that urge and beseech. But he who entertains such guests must pay a price, and the blood of the Celt is charged with its own mystical penalty. . . .

These thoughts have been much with me, Madame, while passing some quiet days at a health resort conducted by an order of Bavarian nuns in the hills of New Jersey. They are called the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother—Sisters of the *Toilsome* Mother would perhaps more accurately describe them. For they are not sorrowful, at least in outward seeming, and their industry surpasses anything that I have ever seen among *religieuses*. To the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience they have added a still more arduous one—labor. Liter-

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ally they exemplify in their toilsome days, as like one another as the beads of a rosary, that to labor is to pray—*laborare est orare.*

Certainly the accusation of "holy sloth" does not lie against these wise and humble women, sanctified equally by work and prayer. If all religious orders were like this I do not see how a public prejudice could be aroused against them, as recently in France and Spain. From five in the morning until nine at night they are constantly *working*—not merely fussing or appearing busy. They watch over the comfort of their fifty guests—the majority of these women, too—with a care and zeal that put every normal person in an apologetic frame of mind. You leave your room for a few minutes and returning find that something has been done in your absence—a slight but perceptible addition to your comfort or satisfaction. One has the novel and agreeable sense of being constantly yet not obstrusively looked after. It is a little like the service of angels, unseen; for, however vigilant you may be, scarce will you surprise the flitting of a black robe from the just visited chamber. One feels also that one has never seen even a passable substitute for the nuns' idea of cleanliness.

All this ministration is swift, silent, effective, an endless source of wonder to the city visitor used to the careless functions of the Housemaids' Union and the strong-armed attentions of the Waiters'

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Bund. I almost shouted for joy when I first saw the nuns serve in the dining room,—voiceless, deft, intuitive,—and I said to myself, "Surely this is waiting to the glory of God!"

I agree, Madame, that there is a strong racial reason for the laborious virtues of this little community. The Bavarians are workers first and spouses of Christ afterward; also these women came mostly from the peasant class and were early inured to rough labor. But this trait gains the highest value where the religious motive coincides with the racial disposition. The union of both has wrought visible wonders here since fifteen years ago a worthy priest and a half dozen sisters started the undertaking, with scarce any capital, trusting in their purpose to serve God and humanity. To-day the place is over two hundred acres in extent, with every natural beauty that heart could desire (I should like you to see the great German linden and the sentinel pines that guard this conventual retreat); wood and pasture and meadow, and (as Robert Louis wished) a river beside the door; add a landscape of which the eye never wearies and surrounding all a horizon of misty hills. There is a large and perfectly equipped sanitarium, with a model farm, stables, dairy, etc. The table witnesses the excellent gardening and farming abilities of the sisters, being almost exclusively supplied with their own produce.

Now the point I wish to make to the glory of

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your sex, Madame, is that all this great undertaking, —a large and difficult business, if you please,—has been founded, built up and carried to success by women; and all the actual work in the place, save the heaviest labors of the farm, is done by their hands. Hundreds have been cured of serious ailments here, and, more important still, other hundreds, of varying creeds, have received here an impulse toward human love, tolerance and charity which has blessed and sweetened their lives, by whatever name you may call it. . . .

My mind was busy with such thoughts, Madame, when, coming back at dusk last evening from a stroll to the nearest village, I stopped suddenly in the path leading to the house, arrested by the sound of singing. It was the Sisters holding May devotion in their little chapel. Heavenly sweet their pure voices rose in the stillness and odorous beauty of the night.

Ave Maria, gratiæ plena: Dominus tecum: Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

What was it in the strain that called the tears to my eyes and kept me standing there an awed listener? Surely not the familiar Latin words, though 'tis always a solemn thought how many generations have heard and repeated them in their changeless faith; nor the music, beautiful as it was with its

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power to evoke early and precious memories. Both indeed helped to work the charm, but chiefly I was smitten by the thought of the sacrifice these devoted women were making. Of the strong claims of human love, the love of husband and little children, which they had put aside and foregone; yet among them are pale sweet faces and eyes that lover or husband or child might well adore. Of the poignant sting of that great renunciation which they must sometimes feel, as now in this warm and scented night, with Nature the eternal enchantress weaving her spells about them. Of the long *via crucis* they have chosen for their earthly portion, the many years of hard, unremitting labor, dulling brain and heart with its servile monotony, unpaid too save for merely necessary food, clothing and shelter, which must stretch between them and the grave to which they are bound to look forward as their victory and guerdon.

In this wise I thought, and so thinking my heart was filled with grief at the pity of it all, and the tears came. But again the thrilling sweet voices rose on the hushed air, and now they seemed to rebuke me for my vain regret. There came now upon me the awe that one must feel in the presence of the Devoted. To assert the cruelty and uselessness of such a sacrifice is to accuse the Divine, I thought. And involuntarily I took off my hat to a Faith which justifies this supreme renunciation and

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makes the long ages but as a night from which the shadows flee away. And as this thought came to me the voices of the nuns swelled to a choral chant of jubilant harmony.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
Et in sæcula sæculorum. Alleluia!

Work and prayer and denial of self, if these do not lead to Heaven, I said, who shall point the way? . . .

Pardon, Madame, you turn your face away as if to hide a smile from him who too often seems a scoffer. Nay, by the rood! but you are weeping. Ah, then, let us bury the incorrigible Celt once more, deep down in our bosom.

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XII

RULES OF THE ROAD

Philosophy in Little

I

IT is asserted that from time to time a man appears on this earth who thinks only of The One Woman, and never knows or desires another during his earthly pilgrimage. I find this easy to believe because of my certain knowledge of another type of man who remains true to his marital vows, yet is always promising himself delicious forbidden pleasures,—and never has the courage, or, as the French say, the enterprise, to go after them. However, there are two sides to every account, and this virtuous man's life is made interesting and perilously delightful by his mental attitude—larks have been known to fall from the sky!

II

After a long stern chase I am convinced that the ingredients of happiness are very few and simple.

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The trouble with most of us is that we think we want too many things and so miss our true aim in the effort to obtain them. It is better to put beauty in your life than money in your purse. Gilt-edged stocks will not compensate you for the poverty of the mind. A city mansion and a country house, the seductions of society and the vain pursuit of the anise-seed bag, will not make up to you for a dearth of soul-life. Cut out the superfluities—and begin to live!

III

Truly saith the Scripture a man's worst foes are those of his own household. For they are the foes whom he cannot meet in fair combat, whose blind rage permits of no justice, whose hatred is unquenched even by the grave.

IV

The little things, the little things!—it is upon these that the great issues wait. Had Napoleon attended to the trifling matter of his digestion, he perhaps never had lost Waterloo nor died of a cancer.

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V

To know your own mind—not such an easy matter, by the way. Indeed, rightly considered, one of the marks of uncommon ability.

VI

I do not know myself better than I did ten years ago, but at least I know that I do not know myself better—which is something of a gain.

VII

Compensation is the master law of life. If you would take, what will you give? Great is that man who can bargain wisely with the fates.

VIII

The friendship of the young is unstable—of the old selfish and reluctant. Be good to thyself!

IX

A man's enemies like to believe that he is far worse than his work would show him; his friends

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that he is about half as good; the few who love him, that he is a little better.

X

It is very disagreeable to meet the Furies, but until one has done so one has been only jesting with life.

XI

Life is made up of meetings and partings. In the long run every man goes his road alone.

XII

Courage is the high road to health; Fear the turnstile to sickness.

XIII

There is a freemasonry of small souls in the world and it is much larger and more influential than the fellowship of noble spirits.

XIV

That *I* that ever watches the other *I*, whose duty it is to praise, blame, criticize, condemn, applaud, rebuke, curse or bless—what is it?

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XV

It matters not how many years but how fully and to what purpose you have lived. Some live to be very old and in the end are driven starving from the Banquet of Life.

XVI

In Actæon torn by Diana's hands the wise Greeks symbolized the fate that attends the unwary pursuit of the Ideal. Life is most cruel to those who approach it from dreams.

XVII

The strength of the weak is often more to be feared than the utmost effort of the strong.

XVIII

The best and most consoling proof of God is when you find Him behind that veil where you sought the Deadly Sin.

XIX

What is so pleasant as to waken from a troubled dream to find a beloved and cheerful face smiling

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upon you? I like to fancy that such will be our awakening from Life unto Death.

XX

The gods load the dice against those who cheat in friendship and in love.

XXI

Tell your friend everything—but not more than he tells you!

XXII

Divination of character is the lamp of life. God help you if you must make your way without it.

XXIII

Fulfil yourself—that is the whole of life.

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THE QUESTION OF ART

I

AFTER all, one writes for only a few persons. This claiming of an audience, this harassing need to make some one listen to you, this buttonholing of people whom you don't know and to whom you bring so small warrant, seems a kind of highway insolence which the world has a right to resent. And in its best and hopefullest aspect what is it? The very effort of writing for the public is merely the sending of your filament of thought out, out beyond your ken, and then waiting with fearful heart to learn perhaps, through some cheery message from the void, that it has caught fast somewhere and all is well. And I note also that one such acceptance is worth many rejections—it is enough that our own know us and receive us, no matter how few. But in the quest of these unknown though kindred spirits, these kindly and related intelligences, one often goes far afield and meets with many a bitter repulse. Ah me! the children of light are few indeed compared to the sons of darkness.

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II

There is something Gothic in the genius of Victor Hugo,—something inchoate and monstrous at once sublime, extravagant and lawless, like the conceptions of the Northern builders. The gargoyle is a symbol of his talent and his method, alike puerile and gigantesque. Heine, it will be recalled, likened him to his own Quasimodo, saying that his genius had a *hump!* A great poet and dreamer, but not strictly a creative artist—the characters of Victor Hugo are merely extensions of his own ego. This is true of the supreme poets generally (though Shakespeare is an exception) to whom ideas are more important than life—words more essential than things.

III

Within his limits Charles Lamb was one of the greatest and sanest of critics. In his knowledge and appreciation of Shakespeare, as well as other old English dramatic writers, and in his literary expression so cunningly packed with the rarest values for mind and ear, it is doubtful if he has ever had an equal. Yet even this wise and gifted man of letters could not, when influenced by prejudice, be just to a contemporary. He would never admit the great-

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ness of Byron—rarely mentions him in his letters and always with disparagement; while of Shelley's poetry he had a very poor opinion.

IV

Literature that endures is never produced by men of great practical shrewdness and worldly wisdom, masters of the Main Chance: it asks a spiritual detachment which leaves the writer naked to the world. "If you aim to excel at intrigue," said Voltaire (an excellent judge), "you will fall off in literary power." And Renan said: "I think like a man and act like a child." Business men as a rule despise the literary character—and, by the way, since the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews have written few books.

V

What is so curious as the private judgments of literary men upon each other? Here's Meredith, in a posthumously published piece of the cleverest and most effective English that ever flowed from his pen, scoring Dickens as a glorified Cockney and doing little better by Thackeray. Was this the old man's bitterness because he could never share their great fame and public favor? In some unconscious

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degree perhaps it was, but who will question the integrity of Meredith?

VI

After reading, in a lately published letter, how Thackeray got his broken nose at the hands of a young aristocrat for whom he fagged at public school, one has the secret of the bitterness of many pages. Stevenson says that the blow from Rawdon Crawley's fist on the countenance of Lord Steyne made "Vanity Fair" a work of art. So Thackeray's young tyrant and his disfiguring boot-heel probably did much to make the future satirist.

VII

Must the brain too finely wrought forever prey upon and destroy itself? Can we not have genius without the straitjacket, poetry and high thought without the psychopathic ward, the vision and the faculty divine without the grated cell and the madman's moon? Shall the Hamlets forever go awry while the Osrics and the Guildensterns keep their precious wits? Must life forever remain a house of safety for fools and a dungeon of terrors for the gifted few? . . .

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VIII

Neglected geniuses may take comfort in pondering the case of Meredith and Swinburne. Both were practically unknown to the vast public which took to its bosom Dickens and Longfellow. Neither of them ever made any money to speak of by his writings, therefore could not have lived by his pen. Yet each was a master in his literary province and the fame of both is of the kind that grows with the ages. So, at least, the critics are telling us, and it may be true since, as a general rule, whatever in literature becomes vastly and immediately popular is rarely of enduring worth.

IX

D'Annunzio's books have been placed on the Index. Fogazzaro's "Leila" has been condemned since the death of the author. Why does the wise Church continue thus to record its hatred of genius? Is it because religious works and orthodox novels are so commonly neglected? But really the Index should have gone with the Inquisition—it has no longer even an advertising value.

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X

Only the writer who is absolutely free can do a great work. There must be no constraint of the will, no divided service, no allegiance anywhere but to the master call. And all times and seasons must be his to do or leave undone.

XI

The writer who works in both prose and verse has a right hand and a left, though he hates to confess it, especially if poetry be his left hand. Nature dislikes to double her gifts.

XII

Nulla dies sine linea is not a good motto for everyone. Better let the mind lie fallow for periods —'tis a rich soil indeed where there is always harvest.

XIII

Truth shrinks to the bottom of her well, and that unseizable thing the writer labors to utter eludes him in the depths of his own soul.

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XIV

There is hardly anything in books which we may not get out of ourselves by right thinking. But few have the courage to think, even when they have the ability; and so literature is really the world's excuse for getting the other fellow to do the digging.

XV

To be a successful and admired humorist it is necessary that you should have many sad hours of which the world has no profit.

XVI

Balzac's heroes sleep with clenched fists—an excellent image of the Master's will and purpose.

XVII

Every true writer has that within himself which he will find in no book: the effort to express this is at once his torture and his delight.

XVIII

At a recent sale some of Lafcadio Hearn's minor manuscripts brought prices that he would have been

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glad to get for his books. Fame and Death are profitable partners.

XIX

Three things make the writer: style, idiosyncrasy, passion; and the greatest of these is passion.

XX

To get it written, to get it spoken, to get it done, at any cost and at any hazard—it is for that and that only we are here!

XXI

There have been great poets but never a great satirist who died under thirty-five.

XXII

The mission of the artist is to perpetuate himself in his work—not death but forgetfulness is the terror constantly before his eyes.

XXIII

The clearing-house of genius is full of promissory notes that have gone to protest.

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XXIV

The artist whose brain is a mine of gold still has to swing the pick.

XXV

Do not envy the genius unless you know, and are willing to pay, his penalty.

XXVI

Genius should be near allied to madness—but not too near!

XXVII

After all, literature is not nearly so important a thing as the literary-minded believe, bless my soul! Was it not Stevenson who said that to a plain man a pipe of tobacco is rightly worth more than all the books in the world?

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THE GREAT PERHAPS

I

I NOTICE that those persons who are fond of saying that God has done all for the best have excellent reason for believing that He has done the best for them.

II

The notion of God as a large clergyman in the sky is dying hard. But it *is* dying.

III

The thinker is hated especially by these two: the man who can't and the man who won't think.

IV

The most popular form of religion is a kind of spiritual self-coddling. We hire men to tell us the things we should like to believe.

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V

Renan made Tréguier a magic name in the history of mind—Tréguier which lately rose in fanatical revolt and sought to deface his monument. "Oh, Jerusalem, thou who stonest the prophets!"

VI

Dost thou wish to be free? Then prepare thy soul to stand alone,—for where freedom is, there also is Golgotha and abandonment.

VII

A dear old friend has withdrawn his hand and heart from me because, though we agreed in all things that we knew, we fell out concerning the Unknowable!

VIII

God made man in his own image and likeness, and this was well. But the trouble started when man set about to return the compliment; and it has been going on ever since.

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IX

To move mountains it is not so necessary to have faith yourself as that another should have faith in you.

X

The mind can entertain many creeds—the heart but one.

XI

The best affirmation of immortality is the human heart singing on its way to death.

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THE ETERNAL FEMININE

I

MY mother never knew the love for which her heart hungered, and perhaps that is why I too am so often craving and unsatisfied. When I am sometimes made entirely happy I fancy that my mother smiles—not too far away!

II

Women pay dearly for their brief dominion over the senses. Never was a beauty so desired against which it was not written—"The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida."

III

The senses guarantee neither love nor fidelity. There are no bitterer foes than those who have gone the ways of the flesh together.

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IV

Always we ask ourselves, does He or She love us? The desire to be loved is the first to come and the last to leave us.

V

Love and Hate and Jealousy often live in the same house, though you will find only Love's name on the door.

VI

One must be very old indeed when the heart does not whisper, "Wait! the best years are to come."

VII

"To be blind and to be loved, what happier fate!" exclaims Hugo. To love and to be blind is the common dispensation.

VIII

A passion means the renewal of youth, a second draught of the enchanted Goblet of Life. That is

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the true reason for the scandals and tragedies of the middle-aged.

IX

If before dying you might have one day of perfect life and health with any woman of your choice, you would choose your wife, of course. Of course.

X

There is but one evil thing in this world which the Devil allows that he cannot improve—hate that has once been love.

XI

Blessed are the friendships, the calm, cool friendships, that die a natural death, leaving neither regret nor rancor!

XII

Only when the Beloved comes to him who has too long waited for her do the pitying years strive to return.

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XIII

Many a man has tried to love two women at the same time, but there is no record of a perfect success.

XIV

Women never forgive the debts of the heart nor men the debts of the purse.

XV

Nature thrives by tooth and claw: even love is warfare and marriage often a duel to the death.

XVI

Every passion becomes a tyranny, but a man without passions cannot be said to live.

XVII

It is woman's eternal fate to make and to destroy the human paradise.

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XVIII

The heart has secrets which it will scarcely whisper to the mind.

XIX

The heart has its tears and they are the bitterest of all.

THE END

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